Upper Grand District School Board
Beliefs about Special Education

- We believe all students can learn.
- We value each student’s unique ability, individuality, learning style and pace of learning.
- We believe that the growth, the development and the learning of each student is enhanced in the most enabling environment.
- We believe that the inclusion of exceptional students in the school community provides a valuable learning experience for all children.
- We deliver programs which incorporate realistic goals and objectives through individualized teaching and assessment methods.
- We respect the rights of parents to make informed decisions in the best interests of their children.
- We respect, value and encourage collaborative partnerships with parents, community agencies and professionals.
- We provide a variety of placements and resources which reflect effective programs and strategies for exceptional pupils.
- We recognize the wealth of learning opportunities in the community which assist students with transitions to offer work experiences and to allow their pursuit of specials abilities or talents.
- We value early intervention for all students experiencing difficulties in school and/or needing enrichment.
**Introduction**

This guide was written for parents to answer questions about Special Education Services before an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting is held for their child.

If you need more information after reading this guide, please contact the Student Support and Program Services Department of the Upper Grand District School Board located at the Grant Evans Education Centre, 40 Amelia Street, Orangeville, Ontario, L9W 3T8. Telephone: 519-941-6191.

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children. Please see the list of parent organizations represented on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) page on the UGDSB website.

**Notes:**

1. For accessible formats (e.g. large print, electronic copy of this guide) contact the Special Education Department of the Upper Grand District School Board located at the Grant Evans Education Centre, 40 Amelia Street, Orangeville, Ontario, L9W 3T8. Telephone: 519-941-6191

2. In this guide, the word “parents” is meant to include “guardian”.

More information about Special Education Services can be found on the Upper Grand District School Board website under Programs>Special Education
Upper Grand District School Board  
Special Education Model

When parents have a concern about their child’s success in school, the following are the steps that lead to special education services. **Parents and educators are encouraged to work as collaborative partners throughout the steps.**

**Step 1: Talk with the teacher**

When parents have a special education concern about their child, the first step is to talk with the child’s teacher. Then the parent and teacher develop a plan to deal with the concerns.

**Step 2: In-School Teams**

The student’s classroom teacher can work with the school Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), or Principal/Vice Principal (P/VP) to discuss the student’s plan and progress. This happens at regularly scheduled In-School Team (IST) meetings.

**Step 3: Consultant Support Team**

At any time, the teacher, parent and/or principal may decide to seek the advice of program consultants. This is typically available to all schools through a professional meeting called a Consultant Support Team (CST). **Parents are consulted along the way and the school will ask for parental permission to speak about their child at the CST and before arranging any recommended follow-up.**

The Consultant Support Team (CST) meets several times throughout the school year. It includes school staff as well as:

- Special Education Consultant
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- School Psychologist
- Counselling and Attendance Services staff

The team will discuss what has been done so far to help the student and make additional suggestions or recommendations. Discussion topics may include:

- assessments to find out more about the student’s learning needs
- supports that are available in the community
- data collected about the student’s successes and needs

**Collaborative Case Conference**

A collaborative case conference is a meeting that is held that focuses on one student for a more in-depth discussion. Collaborative case conferences are held as needed throughout elementary and secondary school. Collaborative case conferences are held to share information, to develop plans or to respond to concerns. Parents, school staff,
board staff and community services providers may attend case conferences.

Examples of collaborative case conferences are: a transition meeting for a student with complex needs who is beginning junior kindergarten; and a case conference to develop a plan to support a secondary school with a recent diagnosis of a mental health disorder. These meetings may be held to share assessment findings from board assessments or assessments from community resources.
The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is often developed for students when special supports are needed. It is not necessary to have an Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) meeting before starting an IEP for a student.

What is an IEP?

- an IEP is a written plan that describes the special education program and/or services needed by a student.
- it is based on assessments that show the student’s strengths and needs.
- it describes the key features of the program and/or services.
- it is not a daily plan or outline of everything that will be taught to the student.

How does an IEP help a student?

- it is a working document for sharing information about your child, and can be updated at any time to reflect new information.
- it encourages open communication between you and the school about your child’s strengths, needs and next steps.
- it helps current and future teachers understand your child’s learning profile, strengths and needs, and any accommodations he or she needs.
- it may set out educational and program goals that are appropriate and measurable for your child. This allows you and school staff to monitor your child’s growth and learning.
- it identifies types and levels of support necessary to help your child be successful.

What is the difference between accommodations and modifications?

Modified programs make changes to the Ontario curriculum expectations in order to meet your child’s learning needs. The current grade-level curriculum may be changed to have fewer and/or less complex expectations, or changed to the expectations of a lower grade level.

Examples of modified programs:
- a Grade 7 student working on fewer of the Grade 7 expectations in mathematics.
- a Grade 7 student working on Grade 5 expectations for language.

Alternative programs involve knowledge and skills that are not part of the regular Ontario curriculum. The annual goal and expectations are created to help develop knowledge and skills that the student needs.

Examples of alternative programs:
- technology use
- self-regulation
• Personal care

**What must be included in the IEP?**

An IEP includes:

• strengths and needs
• current and relevant assessment information that has been collected by teachers and other professionals
• accommodations
• modified and alternative program goals, if applicable
• a transition plan
• other special education services and supports provided to the student
• a summary of collaboration dates and discussions with parents and their child in the IEP development
The Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)
Where an IEP focuses on the program supports and curriculum focus for a student, an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) is a process for students who receive a diagnosis in any of the following areas: behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical and/or multiple disability and wish to be considered for exceptional student identification. A student can have an IEP without going through the IPRC process however, once a student has been identified as exceptional through an IPRC, an IEP is developed.

What is the role of the 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
- decide an appropriate Upper Grand District School Board placement for your child
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year

What is an Identification Placement and Review Committee?
This is a committee that all Ontario school boards must set up as required by the Ontario Education Act. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons and must include a principal or vice-principal.

The Upper Grand District School Board has both System level and School level Identification Placement and Review Committees.

A System Level IPRC usually includes:
- Principal/Vice Principal of the student's school, or designate
- One other member (Special Education Teacher, Classroom Teacher)
- Special Education Consultant (Chairperson)
- Parents

This committee conducts the first IPRC meeting for a student and additional meetings for special circumstances.

A School Level IPRC usually includes:
- Principal (Chairperson) or designate
- Special Education Teacher
- Classroom Teacher
- Parents

This committee meets once a year to review the education and placement plan for a student after the initial IPRC has taken place.
What are the different types of placements?

Students for whom more than 50% of the instructional day is delivered in a regular class:

- **Regular class with Indirect Support**
  - students who are enrolled in a regular class and are receiving direct specialized instruction from a regular classroom teacher to whom the board provides specialized consultative services.

- **Regular class with Resource Assistance**
  - students who are in a regular class and are receiving direct specialized instruction, individually or in a small group with the regular classroom from a special education teacher.

- **Regular class with Withdrawal Assistance**
  - students who are enrolled in a regular class and are receiving instruction outside the regular classroom for part of the school day from a special education teacher.

Students for whom more than 50% or more of the instructional day is delivered in a special class:

- **Special Education class with Partial Integration**
  - students who are enrolled in and attending a self-contained special education class and integrated for at least one instructional period daily.

- **Special Education class Full Time**
  - students who are enrolled and attending a self-contained special education class for the entire school day.

What special education programs and services are provided by the board?

Students who need special education programs and services usually receive support through the classroom teacher and the school's Special Education Resource teacher. However, there are other special education placements if additional support is needed. Specialized class programs in Upper Grand District School Board include: Developmental Disability, Learning Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability, and Gifted.

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 severely learning disabled students 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. For a list of provincial and demonstration schools, please see page 16 or visit the Ministry of Education website.
Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?
The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as “a pupil whose behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program…”

Students are identified according to how their needs match the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education which are:

- **Behavioural**
- **Communication**
  - Autism
  - Deaf and Hard of Hearing
  - Language Impairment
  - Speech Impairment
  - Learning Disability
- **Intellectual**
  - Giftedness
  - Mild Intellectual Disability
  - Development Disability
- **Physical**
  - Physical Disability
  - Blind and Low Vision
- **Multiple**
  - Multiple Exceptionalities

For more information about the categories and definitions of exceptionalities, please see page 17.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?
The principal of your child’s school requests an IPRC meeting when:

- the principal and your child’s teacher(s) believe that special education services are required that could be supported through the IPRC process (e.g., consideration for small class placement). Parents must be notified in writing before the IPRC is requested.
- a parent makes a written request for an IPRC to the principal. (Within 15 days of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.)

May parents attend the IPRC meeting?
Yes, parents are encouraged to attend the meeting. Questions and input from parents are welcome.
What if parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?
Parents may:
• contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time if possible;
• let the school principal know you will not be attending;
• if you do not attend, the principal will send you the IPRC’s written statement of identification and placement decision and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services. You will be asked to consider the decision and sign the form if you agree.

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?
Either you or the principal of your child’s school may ask for others to attend the meeting. This may include:
• other school resource people such as our child’s teacher, special education staff, board support staff
• the representative of an agency who may provide further information or clarification
• a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child
• an interpreter; (if one is required, you can request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child’s school)

What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?
• at least 10 days before the meeting, you will receive written notification of the date, time and place of the meeting.
• you will be invited to attend as an important partner in considering your child’s placement.
• you will need to indicate whether you will attend.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?
• the chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
• the committee will review:
  o all available information about your child provided by the school
  o information that you may have submitted about your child ahead of time
  o information provided by your child 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 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.
• 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 its decision.
What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

- the IPRC committee will consider if your child’s needs could be met in a regular class with appropriate special education services.
- if not, a special education class (50% or more of the day) may be considered. If so, the committee must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement.
- parent preferences for the child’s placement are considered before a decision is made.

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;
  - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education;
  - 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;
- if the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, and the reasons for that decision.

What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

If you agree with the recommendations about your child’s identification and placement, you will be asked to sign the IPRC form. The school will forward you this form following the IPRC meeting. The school will be notified that you agree with the decision and then an IEP will be developed within 30 school days of placement.

Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?

- identified students have their exceptionalities and placement reviewed by a school level IPRC once a year.
- you may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.
- 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 can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?

If you do not agree with the IPRC’s identification or placement decision you may:

- within 15 days of the 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 of Education and Secretary-Treasurer, Upper Grand District School Board, 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, ON N1E 6K2.

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.

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.
The IPRC Appeal Process

How does the parent appeal an IPRC decision?

If the parent disagrees with the IPRC’s identification of their child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, he or she 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 their intention to appeal the decision to the secretary of the board.

The notice of appeal must:
- indicate the decision with which the parent disagrees; and
- include a statement that sets out his or her 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 the appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons (one of whom is to be selected by the parent) 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 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents 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.
- the parent and student, 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 recommendations 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 the student’s identification, placement, or both.
- the appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to the parent 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).
- the parent may accept the decision of the school board, or may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. The parent 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.
IEP Dispute Resolution

The development of the IEP should be a collaborative process that includes parents and the student (if possible). During the development phase schools are required to seek feedback (consultation) with parents. This is your opportunity to discuss and consult with the classroom teacher and/or special education resource teacher regarding your child’s IEP.

Parents know their child best. Their collaboration with the school team is crucial to ensure that their child’s needs are fully understood. They can help by discussing their child's history, strengths and needs with the IEP team, along with their goals for learning. Students are most successful when all team members work together towards achievable goals. If parents have questions or concerns about their child’s IEP or progress, they are encouraged to speak to the classroom teacher.

If a disagreement between parents and school staff regarding significant aspects of the IEP occurs, resolution of these issues should take place through a School Team meeting. We endorse the prevention and conflict resolution strategies and ideas promoted in “Shared Solutions: A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs” (Ministry of Education, 2007). Contact information for board staff can be obtained from the school, or by contacting the Administrative Assistant for the Special Education Department 519-941-6191 ext. 260.

The following IEP Dispute Resolution process will be implemented in the event of a dispute:

1. Parent speaks with Classroom Teacher and/or SERT if unresolved
2. Parent speaks with Principal if unresolved
3. Parent speaks with Special Education Consultant if unresolved
4. Parent speaks with Superintendent of School if unresolved
5. Parent speaks with Superintendent of Program if unresolved
6. Parent speaks with Director of Education if unresolved
7. Ministry of Education staff may be consulted if a situation could not be resolved.

Provincial and Demonstration Schools

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

Sagonaska Demonstration School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Phone: 613-967-2830

Trillium Demonstration School
347 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 3X9
Phone: 905-878-2851

Amethyst Demonstration School
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Phone: 519-453-4400

Schools for the Deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 2M5
Phone: 905-878-2851 TTY: 905-878-7195

The Robarts School for the Deaf
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Phone and TTY: 519-453-4400

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Phone and TTY: 613-967-2823

School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind:

W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Phone: 519-759-0730

Francophone school for the deaf and for those with learning disabilities:

Centre Jules-Léger
281 Avenue Lanark
Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8 Phone: 613-761-9300
Parent Organizations

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

Parent support groups currently represented on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are listed on the Upper Grand District Board website.

Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from the Special Education Department of the Upper Grand District School Board located at 40 Amelia Street, Orangeville, Ontario, L9W 3T8. Telephone: 519-941-6191.
Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

The following are the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry.

Behavior

Behavior: A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

a) an inability to build or maintain interpersonal relationships
b) excessive fears or anxieties
c) a tendency to compulsive reaction
d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

Communication

Autism: A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

a) disturbances in:
   o rate of educational development
   o ability to relate to the environment
   o mobility
   o perception, speech and language
b) lack of representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing: An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

Language Impairment: A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in the comprehension and/or use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

a) involve one or more of the form, content and function of language in communication; and
b) include one or more of the following:
   o language delay
   o dysfluency
   o voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based
Speech Impairment: A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

Learning Disability: A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

   a) is not primarily the result of:
      - impairment of vision
      - impairment of hearing
      - physical disability
      - developmental disability
      - primary emotional disturbance
      - cultural difference
   b) results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:
      - receptive language (listening, reading)
      - language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating)
      - expressive language (talking, spelling, writing)
      - mathematical computations; and
   c) may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:
      - a perceptual handicap
      - a brain injury
      - minimal brain dysfunction
      - dyslexia
      - developmental aphasia

Intellectual Giftedness: An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

Mild Intellectual Disability: A learning disorder characterized by:

   a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service;
   b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;
c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

**Developmental Disability:** A severe learning disorder characterized by:

a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development

b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development

c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support

**Physical**

**Physical Disability:** A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

**Blind and Low Vision:** A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

**Multiple**

**Multiple Exceptionalities:** A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.