

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Q - How will the school support my child's medical needs?***

**A** - Each school board will have their own policies around supporting children with medical needs in school, including medications, injections, catheters, etc. Please include information about your child's medical needs when you register him or her for kindergarten. The school will work with you to develop a plan to ensure your child's medical needs are met. If your child must take medication during school hours, you will have to complete a *Record of Administration of Oral Medication* form (or a similar form). Medications are secured in the main office or another safe area in the school. A staff member (e.g. secretary, administrator, or educational assistant) administers the medication as directed on the form. It is your responsibility to ensure that enough medication has been provided to the school to meet your child's needs. You should also inform your child's school about any specialized equipment your child uses when you register him or her.

### ***Q – If my child currently uses specialized equipment at home, can it be taken to school?***

**A** – It is important to inform your child's school about any specialized equipment your child currently uses at home when you register him or her. This equipment may include wheelchairs, walkers, standing frames, adapted utensils or tools, communication books, computers, or many other devices. Although this equipment may have been purchased through the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) or leased through the Central Equipment Pool (CEP), it will likely be required in the school setting to ensure your child is able to participate in daily activities to the best of his or her ability. Therapists currently working with your child can support the transition process in different ways. They might visit the school to make sure hallways and doorways can accommodate larger equipment, provide training to school staff about the use and care of the equipment, or proper lifting techniques. The exact nature of involvement should be decided in collaboration with the school team.

### ***Q – What if my child requires additional specialized equipment once attending school?***

**A** – If your child requires further equipment once attending school, a Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claim file could potentially be opened on your child's behalf. SEA is funding provided to school boards to assist with the cost of specialized equipment where the equipment:

1. Is essential for a student to access the Ontario curriculum and/or alternative program and/or attend school **and**
2. Has been recommended by a qualified professional.

Should your child require specialized equipment, school board personnel will discuss guidelines for submitting SEA claims.

The school will work with you, as well as community agencies involved with your child, to determine exactly what your child will need to support him or her in the school environment.



**Q - If the school board purchased my child's equipment, are we able to use it outside of school?**

**A -** Yes. Different school boards have specific policies about taking equipment home and assigning responsibility for any equipment use outside of the school setting. Talk to your child's principal regarding the school board's guidelines for equipment use during evenings, weekends and school holidays.

**Q - If my child changes schools or school boards, does equipment purchased through SEA funding go with them?**

**A -** Yes. Any equipment purchased through SEA can be moved to another school or school board in Ontario. This transfer of equipment however does not apply to private schools or post-secondary institutions.

**Q - If the school board is accessing SEA funding to purchase equipment needed at school, are we still able to access ADP (Assistive Devices Program) funding?**

**A -** Yes. ADP can still be accessed to purchase equipment once your child enters school however this is for equipment that will be used primarily at home. Once a child enters school, ADP will not fund equipment that is to be used primarily at school; this is when SEA funding should be explored.

**Q - Does my child have to go to school all day every day?**

**A -** Junior and senior kindergarten programs are optional for students. All children must attend school full time starting at age 6. Most schools now offer full day, every day kindergarten programs and transportation is available on that basis. If you feel that your child may not be ready for full day, every day, schooling, share this information with the school principal. Flexible attendance can be included in your child's transition plan to reflect your child's needs and to help ensure your child's first school experience is a positive one.

Please note, however, that most children want to attend on the same days as their classmates once they begin school. Transportation may not be available if you request an alternate schedule for your child.

**Q - Who will help my child in the washroom?**

**A -** Your child's safety and personal dignity are very important to school staff. If your child's identified needs include help in the washroom, an educational assistant (EA) will be able to provide that care. The EA understands and provides support in a number of different areas such as personal care routines (e.g. washroom, dressing, etc.), medical needs (e.g. allergies, medications, etc.) and physical needs (e.g. mobility, lifting, feeding, etc.). In order to best plan support for your child, please make arrangements to meet with school staff, including the EA, if known, as soon as possible.



***Q - What is a nutrition break? How often are they scheduled?***

**A** - Many school schedules are now based on a “balanced school day”, which consists of three instructional time blocks of 100 minutes each plus two 40 or 45 minute nutrition breaks in between. The balanced school day has replaced the traditional school day, which included two short recesses and a longer lunch/recess period. Each nutrition break includes time to eat, usually 20 minutes, and time outside. All nutrition breaks are fully supervised by school staff. If your child needs direct supervision when eating or during recess, an educational assistant or other school staff member will be available to support his or her needs.

***Q - What does a typical day look like?***

**A** - Every school and Early Learning-Kindergarten classroom will be slightly different, but all are guided by the same principles, to provide a play-based learning environment and establish a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Most classes start with all children in a central meeting area and then each instructional block is broken up into a variety of activities that are designed to engage your child in hands-on learning and play opportunities. You may request a copy of your child’s schedule after school begins in September. Information about Full-Day Early Learning- Kindergarten Program and other resources are available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/kindergarten/>

***Q – What is the difference between an educational assistant (EA) and a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE)?***

**A** - An educational assistant (EA) is a trained educator working as part of your child’s support team. The EA works under the direction of the classroom teacher to implement your child’s program as outlined in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP). All Full Day Early-Learning Kindergarten classrooms have a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) who works in partnership with the teacher to deliver the classroom program throughout the day. The role of the EA relates directly to specific student needs whereas the teacher and the RECE are responsible for the entire class.

***Q – What is the difference between the childcare resource teacher and the school resource teacher?***

**A** - The childcare resource teacher supports children, their families and staff in early childhood settings. Responsibilities can include working directly with your child, advocating on his or her behalf and case management. The childcare resource teacher can play a key role in helping to make your child’s transition to school as smooth as possible. The time they have spent with your child can provide valuable information to your child’s support team.

The school resource teacher works with the school team, parents and outside agencies, as needed, to develop and implement programs based on a student’s individual needs. In addition, the school resource teacher also coordinates the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and guides the development and implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP).



**Q - Who do I speak to about getting extra support for my child?**

**A** - The school has a responsibility to meet your child's needs. Additional support takes many forms and is allocated based on a number of factors including the documentation provided. It is essential that your child's needs be clearly presented by you and members of your child's support team (i.e. childcare staff and other professionals providing service to your child). This is usually done at your child's case conference.

**Q - Can I spend some time at school with my child?**

**A** - Schools are very eager to ensure a successful transition into the school setting and part of that transition can include parents spending some time at school with their child. This decision is made based on the child's needs. You can discuss this with your child's principal and this strategy can become part of your child's transition plan, if necessary.

**Q - Do the kindergarten students go outside with the rest of the school during recess?**

**A** - There is no standard practice or procedure for recess for kindergarten students within each school board. Variables such as the size of the school, space in the school yard and nutrition break schedules affect the recess routines for kindergarten students. Your child's teacher or principal can provide details about the recess schedule for your child's school.

**Q - How do you respond to bullying?**

**A** - This is one of a series of important questions that parents often ask teachers and principals. Every school has a Code of Behaviour/Code of Conduct, based on the Safe Schools Act. This document is available to all parents and students. Your child's teacher or principal should be able to clearly explain how the school deals with incidents that are contrary to the school's Code of Behaviour/Code of Conduct. Every situation is dealt with on an individual basis, based on the needs and characteristics of the students involved. In the case of bullying, the school has a responsibility to inform parents of each incident and how it was dealt with.

For more information on Safe and Caring Schools, visit

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/Caring\\_Safe\\_School.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/Caring_Safe_School.pdf)

**Q - Where can I find information on school policies and procedures?**

**A** - Information on school policies and procedures is available at the school. Most schools use a system of agenda books to communicate with parents. The opening pages of the agenda book often have a section dedicated to school policies and procedures. Please don't hesitate to speak to your child's principal should you have any specific questions regarding policies and procedures. For example, you may want to know how the school will support your child during fire drills or field trips or who to inform if your child is ill.

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***Q- How will I know what is happening with my child at school?***

**A** - Most schools have a system of agenda books that are used for daily communication between the school and home. Some schools have interactive, live websites that list what is happening daily as well as class activities. You can ask your child's teacher how information will be communicated from school to home and from home to school. Make sure you also share with the school the type of information you would like to receive about your child's day at school.

**SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION**

The following information about school transportation is provided for reference only. Transportation for all the schools in the East and West Parry Sound districts is coordinated by the Nipissing-Parry Sound Student Transportation Services (NPSSTS). To ensure accuracy of information, please speak with your school principal or contact the NPSSTS by phone at (705) 472-8840 or (705) 773-7970, or by e-mail at [info@npssts.ca](mailto:info@npssts.ca). In order to allow NPSSTS enough time to review and respond to your request for transportation, it is best to contact the school or NPSSTS in the spring before your child starts school.

***Q - How will my child get to school?***

**A** - Children in JK and SK are provided transportation; walking distances apply to students in other grades, unless there is an approved exception. Parents sometimes choose to provide their own transportation or walk their child to school. Please advise your child's principal of your choice regarding transportation.

***Q - Who do I talk to about arranging transportation for my child?***

**A** - Transportation must be requested through your child's school. Discuss your child's special needs with the school principal. Requests regarding such things as transportation for attending an "out of zone" school\* or special transportation types (taxi, lift bus, etc.) are reviewed on an individual basis **each year**. Documentation regarding diagnosis, abilities, needs, etc. should be given to the school and will be kept on file at the transportation office.

\*School boards have defined boundaries for each of their schools. When parents wish to have their child attend a school other than the one identified for their home or daycare address, it is called "out of zone". To check which school is in your zone visit [npssts.ca](http://npssts.ca) and click on "Eligibility" or call the number above. Contact the school principal if you wish to discuss your child attending an "out of zone" school.

**Q - Can my child be picked up and dropped off at different addresses?**

**A** - Transportation to or from childcare can be arranged under certain circumstances which include:

- The address is within the school zone
- The schedule is consistent

For example, a child can be picked up at childcare in the morning and dropped off at home in the afternoon, as long as it follows the same routine. Parents' work schedules will not be accommodated.

If a joint custody agreement is in place, you must submit a *Joint Custody* form with a schedule to your child's principal. This form is available at all schools. To obtain transportation for both parental households, the schedule must follow a full week at each address (Monday to Friday, alternating weekly, biweekly or monthly) and a bus route servicing your child's school must already exist for the locations requested: a route will not be altered to accommodate joint custody agreements.

**Q - Can I go on the bus with my child?**

**A** - No. The driver is responsible for everyone on their bus and is not allowed to take any non-student passengers, unless they are an employee of the NPSSTS or otherwise employed in relation to student transportation (i.e. adult bus monitors).

**Q - Can I get transportation if I want my child to attend school for only part of the day?**

**A** - Unless the decision for partial attendance is made by the child's support team (parent, school, school board and community agency, if involved), parents choosing to have their child attend only a half day are responsible for providing transportation mid-day. Note that your child can still take the bus in the morning or the afternoon.

**Q - Can I get transportation to a different address than usual for a certain day or week?**

**A** - No. Temporary changes are not accommodated for safety reasons. Alternate arrangements must be made by the family if the established routine is changed on a temporary basis.