The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

What is an IEP?

The IEP is an active, working document designed to help a student to be successful. It includes the following information:

- The student's strengths, interests and needs;
- Special education programs and/or services a student requires;
- *Annual Goals*: what a student is expected to learn in a school year;
- *Learning Expectations*: what a student will learn in a term;
- *Accommodations:* supports and services a student requires in order to learn at his or her age-appropriate grade level;
- *Modifications:* changes made to the age-appropriate expectations in order to meet a student's learning needs. These can include specific changes to the age-appropriate expectations and expectations that are taken from a different grade level within the Ontario curriculum;
- *Alternate Expectations:* what a student will be learning that is not part of the Ontario curriculum;
- *Teaching Strategies:* what will be used to teach;
- *Assessment Methods:* how the student's progress will be evaluated.

An IEP is not:

- A list of programs and strategies the teacher uses for the entire class;
- A description of everything that will be taught to the student;
- A tool for monitoring or evaluating teacher effectiveness;
- A daily plan of activities.

Which students receive an IEP?

An IEP must be developed for a student if he or she has been identified as requiring special education services and/or programs by the *Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)*. An IEP may also be developed for a student who has not been formally identified by the IPRC but who requires additional supports, as determined by the school team in consultation with the parent(s).

Who writes the IEP?

The classroom teacher, in consultation with the school resource teacher, creates the IEP. The IEP must be written within thirty school days of when a student starts in a new classroom. Parents play an important role in the development of the IEP for their child and are invited to participate in the process. The principal is ultimately responsible for ensuring the IEP is written and implemented.

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What other information is included in the IEP?

The IEP is designed to provide as complete a picture as possible of the student. The following information can help make that happen:

- Relevant medical or health information about the student as well as any specialized health support services (e.g. nurse) required;
- Relevant information from assessments or reports supporting the need for an IEP;
- Information about what the student has achieved and is working on;

What role do I, as a parent, play in the development of the IEP?

You know your child best and have valuable information that can be used to guide the development of the IEP, such as:

- Your goals for your child;
- How your child learns best (learning style) and strategies you have found helpful when teaching your child;
- Reports and recommendations from professionals or agencies working with your child;
- Your child's strengths, talents and abilities;
- Things that challenge your child.

A few tips about the IEP:

- You *must* be consulted in the development of the IEP;
- Inform the school of your desire to have input into the IEP;
- Organize your documents prior to the IEP meeting, such as assessments and program notes, so they are readily available;
- Remember that the IEP focuses on one school year at a time and will change as your child learns and grows;
- You *must* be given a copy of the IEP;
- The IEP is a working document designed to be reviewed and updated at every reporting period.

Please note that this fact sheet was designed to provide a general overview of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) to parents of children with additional needs transitioning into the school system. It does not contain information about every aspect of the IEP. More detailed information can be requested from your child's school or found in the Ministry of Education of Ontario's 2004 IEP Guide, available at the following link
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf.

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