

Part E.
The Individual
Education Plan (IEP)

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PART E. THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

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INTRODUCTION

In Regulation 181/98, "Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils", principals are required to ensure that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed for each student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) within 30 school days, as amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01, of the student's placement in a special education program.

For the convenience of those using this guide, several key sections of Regulation 181/98 are cited below and repeated at relevant points throughout the text. However, principals and others who work with exceptional pupils are advised to refer to the regulation for a full description of responsibilities related to IEPs.

Regulation 181/98, Sections 6 (2)–(8) and 8

6. (2) The board shall 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 for the pupil in consultation with the parent and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

- (3) The individual education plan must include,
- (a) specific educational expectations for the pupil;
 - (b) an outline of the special education program and services to be received by the pupil; and
 - (c) a statement of the methods by which the pupil's progress will be reviewed.

(4) Where the pupil is 14 years of age or older, the individual education plan must also include a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.

(5) Subsection (4) does not apply in respect of a pupil identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.

(6) In developing the individual education plan, the principal shall,

- (a) consult with the parent and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil; and

- (b) take into consideration any recommendations made by the committee [IPRC] or the Special Education Tribunal, as the case may be, regarding special education programs or special education services.

(7) In developing a transition plan under subsection (4), the principal shall consult with such community agencies and post-secondary educational institutions as he or she considers appropriate.

(8) Within 30 school days* after placement of the pupil in the program, the principal shall ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

8. The principal shall ensure that the individual education plan for a pupil is included in the record kept in respect of the pupil under clause 265(d) of the Act, unless a parent of the pupil has objected in writing.

*As amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01. See note on page H34 in Appendix 10.

IEPs may also be prepared for students who are receiving special education programs and services but who have not been formally identified as exceptional.

Parents must be consulted in the development of the IEP and must receive a copy on its completion. Parents must also be consulted about any significant revisions that may be necessary and receive a copy of the revised IEP.

In the policy document *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation, 2000*, the ministry has outlined requirements for the development and review of IEPs to ensure that this work is carried out in a manner that is consistent with Regulation 181/98.

This part of the guide is provided as a resource and contains advice and tips intended to help teachers and others working with exceptional pupils to develop, implement, and monitor high-quality IEPs. A five-step process, based on a team approach, is recommended. Suggestions and sample forms are provided, but teachers may adapt them to suit individual circumstances.

WHAT IS AN IEP?

An IEP is a written plan. It is a working document that describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that student's needs, and how the program and services will be delivered. It also describes the student's progress.

An IEP should be based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths, interests, and needs. It should identify specific goals and expectations for the student, and should explain how the special education program will help the student achieve the goals and expectations set out in the plan. The special education program and services the IEP describes should be modified as necessary by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation.

A student's IEP should be developed, implemented, and monitored in a collaborative manner. The educational growth of a student is best accomplished through the mutual efforts of, and close communication among, the student, the student's parent, the school, the community, and other professionals involved with the student. The IEP provides an opportunity for all those involved with the student to work together to provide a program that will foster student achievement and success.

An IEP is...

- a summary of the student's strengths, interests, and needs and of the expectations for a student's learning during a school year that differ from the expectations defined in the appropriate grade level of the Ontario curriculum;
- a written plan of action prepared for a student who requires modifications of the regular school program or accommodations;
- a tool to help teachers monitor and communicate the student's growth;
- a plan developed, implemented, and monitored by school staff;
- a flexible, working document that can be adjusted as necessary;
- an accountability tool for the student, his or her parents, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping the student meet his or her goals and expectations;
- an ongoing record that ensures continuity in programming;
- a document to be used in conjunction with the provincial report card.

An IEP is not...

- a description of everything that will be taught to the student;
- an educational program or set of expectations for all students;
- a means to monitor the effectiveness of teachers;
- a daily plan.

Figure E.1 is a sample checklist, listing the information that should be included in an IEP.

Figure E.1: Sample Checklist

Important Information to Be Included in an IEP

- Student's strengths and needs as recorded on the statement of decision received from the IPRC
- Relevant medical/health information
- Relevant formal (standardized) assessment data
- Student's current level of educational achievement in each program area
- Goals and specific expectations for the student
- Program modifications (changes to the grade-level expectations in the Ontario curriculum)
- Accommodations required (supports or services that will help the student gain access to the curriculum and demonstrate learning)
- Special education and related services provided to the student
- Assessment strategies for reviewing the student's achievements and progress
- Regular updates, showing dates, results, and recommendations
- Transition plan (if required)

THE IEP PROCESS

Regulation 181/98, subsection 6(8), as amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01, requires the principal, within 30 school days after placement of the pupil in the program, to ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

Under Regulation 181/98, the principal is responsible for ensuring that an IEP is developed for each exceptional pupil. However, although the principal is responsible for ensuring the development of the IEP, he or she may delegate many tasks related to the IEP to teachers.

Once a student has been identified as exceptional and placed in a special education program, the principal should assign to one teacher the primary responsibility for coordinating the development, implementation, and monitoring of the student's IEP.

A *team approach* should underlie the IEP process, and the process should be *goal-oriented*; that is, it should always keep the goals and expectations for the student in mind.

The IEP process involves the following five phases:

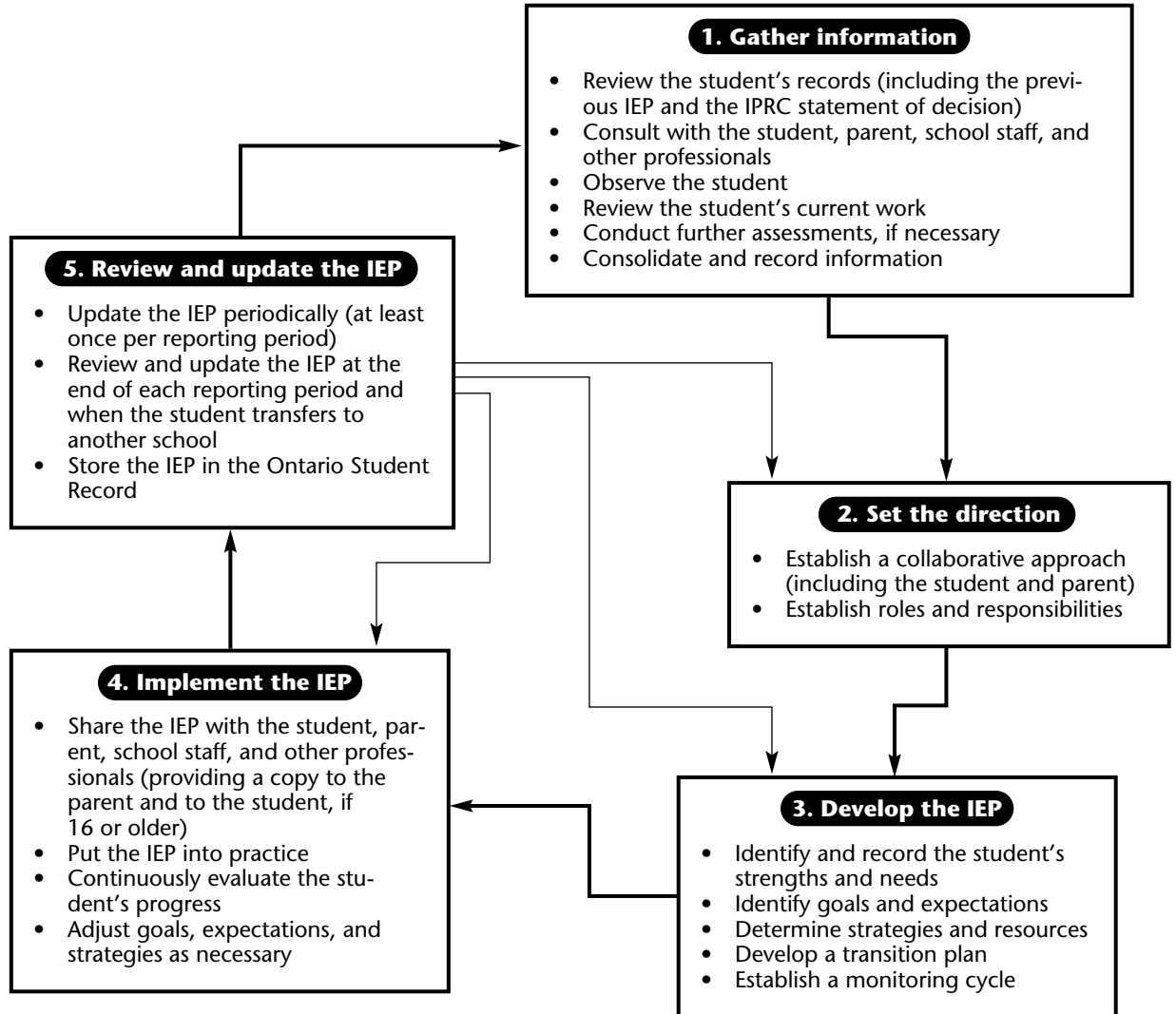
1. Gather information
2. Set the direction
3. Develop the IEP
4. Implement the IEP
5. Review and update the IEP

Figure E.2 presents an overview of the five phases. Members of the student's IEP team may vary the emphasis to meet the student's individual needs, and they may work on more than one phase simultaneously. The circular pattern shown in the figure indicates that the IEP process is continuous, involving ongoing review, evaluation, and adjustments. The arrows extending from the "review and update" box indicate that the review phase involves references back to all earlier phases. Each phase in the process is discussed in detail in the pages that follow Figure E.2.

Figure E.2: Overview of the IEP Process

The IEP Process

The principal assigns to one teacher primary responsibility for coordinating the development, implementation, and monitoring of the student's IEP.



PHASE 1: GATHER INFORMATION

Regulation 181/98, clause 6(6)(b), requires the principal, in developing the individual education plan, to take into consideration any recommendations made by the committee (IPRC) or the Special Education Tribunal, as the case may be, regarding special education programs or services.

Much of the information described below may be in the student's previous IEP, which should be located in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). To save time and effort, the OSR should be checked first.

Information may be gathered about the student's academic achievements, attendance, school behaviour, communication skills, likes, dislikes, talents, problem-solving skills, social skills, learning style, self-concept, mobility, and personalized equipment requirements. This kind of information will help those working with the student to refine their understanding of the student, and will provide a sound basis for developing an appropriate IEP.

Sources of information include the following: the IPRC's statement of the student's strengths and needs and its recommendations for a program and services (from either an initial or a review IPRC); the student's OSR and previous IEP; the student's current work; consultations with the parent, teachers, and others who know the student; observations of the student; and, for students in Grade 7 and beyond, the student's annual education plan. Several of these sources are discussed in detail below.

Review the Student's Records

The student's OSR should be examined for the following information:

- the student's registration form (languages spoken, last school attended, enrolment history);
- relevant medical information;
- the IPRC's decision, including its statement of the student's strengths and needs and any recommendations it may have made respecting programs and services for the student;
- assessment reports from staff consultants and outside agencies, summaries of tests, and interpretive reports;
- the student's previous IEP;
- the student's previous report cards.

Regulation 181/98, clause 6(6)(a), requires the principal, in developing the individual education plan, to consult with the parent and, where the pupil is age 16 or older, the pupil.

The Education Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in the case of school boards (the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in the case of Provincial Schools) contain requirements related to the collection, use, and release of personal information.

Principals and teachers should consult with their board's freedom-of-information coordinators about the steps required to obtain access to personal information about the student that is not contained in the student's OSR (for example, from other professionals who work with the student), and about providing information contained in the student's OSR to other professionals.

Consult With the Student, Parent, School Staff, and Other Professionals

Information should be obtained from a variety of sources and shared among team members so that the planning team can develop a comprehensive view of the student's learning profile and programming needs. Consultation should be a continuous process, involving the student and his or her parent, in-school staff, support personnel, and representatives of outside agencies or services. Some sources who should be consulted are discussed below.

Parents

Parents can provide an invaluable perspective on their child's personality, development, and learning. Open communication and cooperation between home and school will also ensure that the approach and expectations of both are consistent.

Students

As far as possible, all students for whom an IEP is developed should be involved in the IEP process. At the information-gathering phase, they should be encouraged to share their perceptions of their learning strengths, needs, talents, and interests. This information may be gathered through interviews, discussions, and interest inventories.

Previous Teachers

Previous teachers can provide information about a student's strengths and needs and about programs, services, resources, and strategies that have worked well in the past.

Other Professionals

The following people should be consulted for information as necessary and appropriate:

- school administrators
- counsellors
- teacher-advisers
- educational assistants
- resource teachers
- consultants
- occupational therapists
- physiotherapists
- other medical professionals
- social workers
- speech-language pathologists
- psychologists and psycho-educational consultants
- service providers from appropriate community agencies

Observe the Student

By observing the student, teachers may learn:

- how the student responds to text and non-print alternatives, approaches new tasks, persists with tasks, interacts with others, organizes time and materials, uses language, performs individually and in group activities, and responds to cues (including auditory, visual, and direct and indirect verbal cues);
- how the student responds to the number of people in the immediate area and the behaviour of teachers and support staff, interacts with peers, and responds to authority;
- how the student's learning is affected by environmental variables such as lighting, sound, temperature, the physical arrangement of the classroom, the time of day, and routines and schedules.

Teachers may wish to record their observations of students in a variety of ways – for example, notes made about classroom events; checklists; frequency data on specific behaviours; audio and video recordings; interview transcripts; notes reflecting formal and informal observations made by the student's family members, school staff, and support personnel (keeping in mind the privacy requirements cited above); and notes reflecting the student's self-evaluations.

Review the Student's Current Work

Samples of the student's work are good sources of information. They may include journals, selected pages from notebooks, writing samples, art samples and portfolios, audio and video recordings, assignments, unit tests, diagnostic tests, and peer evaluations.

Conduct Further Assessments, If Necessary

Once information has been gathered from the above sources, it should be reviewed to determine if it is sufficient to enable the teacher to plan and implement a program. If it is sufficient, no further assessments may be necessary. If the information is insufficient, additional assessments should be conducted to fill in the gaps.

Additional assessments may include the following: additional observations and work samples; diagnostic tests; teacher-created tests; developmental assessments; medical assessments; psychological assessments; communication assessments; educational assessments; living/vocational skills assessments; and observations of the student in the context of daily routines.

The decision to conduct further assessments should be made in consultation with the student's parent. It is important to inform parents about assessments and help them to understand the nature of the assessments – the

process their child will go through – as well as the benefits and possible outcomes. This will ensure that they can make informed decisions about whether to consent to the assessments. See also the earlier note about privacy requirements.

Consolidate and Record Information

The information gathered should be consolidated and examined for details about the student's strengths, interests, and needs, and for indications of consistent patterns. Assessments should be checked against information gathered from other sources to determine whether the other information supports the patterns revealed by the assessments. Discrepancies should also be examined.

Information about the student's current level of achievement, strengths, and interests, as well as the results of standardized tests, should be recorded in the IEP. The information recorded about the student's current level of achievement should reflect as closely as possible the grade level, range, or performance level for each program area being developed, so that it can serve as a baseline against which the student's progress and achievements in each area can be monitored and evaluated.

PHASE 2: SET THE DIRECTION

Establish a Collaborative Approach

The IEP should be developed collaboratively by those who know the student best and those who will be working directly with the student. Where many individuals are involved in contributing to the development of the IEP and monitoring the effectiveness of selected strategies and resources, a team approach is recommended.

Part C of this guide contains information about in-school teams. This model would be ideal for IEP teams and is recommended wherever feasible. But even where a school is unable to follow the student-support-team model, collaboration among those involved with the exceptional pupil is vital.

The membership of an IEP team can and should vary according to the needs of the individual student. Members may include the student, the student's parents, the student's teachers and teacher-adviser, the guidance counsellor, the principal, and appropriate special education staff and support personnel. If the IEP is subject-specific — as at the secondary level — the team's membership should be modified to reflect this situation.

Collaboration is important to ensure that each member of the team has a common understanding of the student's strengths, interests, and needs. Each team member understands the student in a different way and can lend a different perspective. By bringing these perspectives together, the team can develop a common understanding of the student and a successful strategy for meeting the student's needs.

A team approach enables all those who have an interest in and responsibility for meeting the student's needs to:

- develop a thorough understanding of the student's strengths, interests, and needs;
- share information and observations about the student's behaviour and learning in a variety of settings;
- reach consensus about educational expectations for the student's learning at school, at home, and in the community, with the support of the student's family;
- reach consensus about the type and level of support required from related support services personnel;
- suggest appropriate educational methods and interventions;
- contribute to decisions about integrating support services into the classroom.

Responsibilities that are mandated by Regulation 181/98 are marked with an asterisk (*).

Establish Roles and Responsibilities

Although the principal should assign to one teacher the primary responsibility for coordinating the development of the IEP, all team members have important roles and responsibilities in the IEP process.

The roles and responsibilities of various team members in the development, implementation, and monitoring of IEPs are outlined below. The lists attempt to cover all aspects of an IEP, but responsibilities and tasks will vary with the individual student. They may not all be required in each situation.

The Principal

- assigns to one teacher the primary responsibility for the student's IEP;
- facilitates collaborative planning, evaluating, and updating;
- ensures that IEPs are completed within 30 school days¹ of a student's placement in the program;*
- ensures that IEPs are implemented, evaluated, and updated at least once per reporting period;
- ensures that all school personnel who work with the student understand their responsibilities regarding the implementation of the IEP;
- ensures that the recommendations of the IPRC (with respect to a special education program and services such as support personnel, resources, and equipment) are taken into account in developing the IEP;*
- ensures that parents and the student, if age 16 or older, are consulted in the development of the IEP;*
- in preparing a transition plan, consults with such community agencies and postsecondary institutions as he or she considers appropriate;*
- ensures that a copy of the IEP is provided to the parents and to the student, if age 16 or older;*
- ensures that the updated IEP is stored in the OSR, unless a parent of the student objects in writing.*

The Classroom Teacher

- collaborates in the IEP process;
- contributes to the information-gathering stage (background information, assessment information, work samples, observations, etc.);
- demonstrates awareness of the parents' expectations for their child's program;
- plans and carries out instructional programs for the student;
- modifies or differentiates the expectations for the student's learning as required by the IEP;
- implements accommodations required by the student to achieve the learning expectations;

1. As amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01. See note on page H34 in Appendix 10.

- develops strategies for assessing and communicating the student's progress;
- maintains ongoing communication with the student's parents, other teachers, and other professionals involved with the student.

The Special Education Teacher

- collaborates in the IEP process;
- provides diagnostic assessments as appropriate to determine the student's strengths and needs, if required;
- generates ideas and suggestions for program modification or differentiation or accommodations;
- provides advice about materials and resources;
- provides support to the student's classroom teachers as appropriate;
- plans and carries out instructional programs for the student;
- develops strategies for assessing and communicating the student's progress;
- maintains ongoing communication with the student's parents and other teachers.

The Educational Assistant

- collaborates in the IEP process;
- helps the student with learning activities under the direction of the teacher;
- assists with appropriate modifications and accommodations as described in the IEP;
- monitors and records the student's achievements and progress relative to the expectations described in the IEP, under the direction of the teacher;
- maintains ongoing communication with the student's teachers.

Support Services Personnel

- participate in the IEP process and serve on the IEP team, if requested;
- help determine the student's learning strengths and needs;
- develop strategies for incorporating into classroom routines the learning and therapy that meet the student's needs;
- train staff to implement strategies;
- provide advice about materials and resources;
- provide technical assistance;
- act as a resource for and support to the student's family;
- maintain ongoing communication with the student's teacher and the IEP team;
- conduct assessments as necessary, with informed consent.

As noted earlier, principals and teachers should consult with their board's freedom-of-information coordinators about the steps required to obtain access to personal information about the student that is not contained in the student's OSR (for example, from other professionals who work with the student) and about providing information contained in the student's OSR to other professionals.

Regulation 181/98, clause 6(6)(a), requires the principal, in developing the Individual Education Plan, to consult with the parent and the pupil, if age 16 or older. Subsection 6(8), as amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01, requires the principal, within 30 school days after placement of the pupil in the program, to ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and the pupil, if age 16 or older.

The Student

- identifies and explains his or her goals, priorities, and preferences;
- demonstrates an understanding of the IEP and works actively to achieve goals and expectations;
- monitors progress towards goals;
- considers his or her IEP when developing and reviewing an annual education plan (students in Grade 7 and beyond).

The nature and degree of a student's involvement in the IEP process will vary. However, members of the IEP team should ensure that students understand the purpose of their IEP and how the goals and expectations in the plan are individually tailored, evaluated, reviewed, and updated. They should also ensure that students know that they can participate in the IEP process and how: that is, by becoming, where appropriate, members of the team and attending team meetings; by revealing their learning priorities and preferences; by helping to set their own learning goals and expectations; and by monitoring their own progress. Students should understand how important it is for them to take an active role in their own learning. As part of the self-assessment process, students should, where possible, fill in page 3 of the provincial report card.

The Parents

- collaborate in the IEP process;
- advocate for their child's best interest;
- provide up-to-date medical information and any relevant assessments they may have about their child;
- provide important information about their child's likes, dislikes, learning styles, interests, and reactions to situations, and about the talents and skills their child demonstrates in the home and community;
- reinforce and extend the educational efforts of the teacher by providing opportunities to practise and maintain skills in the home;
- provide feedback on the transfer of skills to the home and community environments;
- maintain open communications with the school.

Members of the IEP team should involve parents in the collaborative process as early as possible. The educational priorities identified by family members are important to the student's overall learning experience. In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, parents play an important role in the IEP process by communicating to the IEP team a picture of the life of their child thus far, suggesting ways to avoid potential problems, and helping the team achieve continuity of programming for the student.

Principals and teachers can support parental involvement by:

- communicating openly and regularly with parents in language that is clear and free of jargon;
- clarifying how parents can participate in the IEP process;
- giving parents the opportunity to specify how, and to what degree, they wish to become involved in their child's educational program;
- checking regularly with parents to share effective strategies and gather feedback;
- contacting parents by telephone as well as in writing to notify them of meetings of the IEP team;
- advising parents of the topics that will be discussed at the IEP meeting and who will attend;
- staying alert to possible parental concern or confusion (asking questions, if necessary);
- clarifying information where necessary to ensure that parents understand their child's IEP and the IEP process;
- ensuring that, as required by Regulation 181/98, parents are sent a copy of the IEP.

PHASE 3: DEVELOP THE IEP

Identify and Record the Student's Strengths and Needs

Many factors – physical, intellectual, educational, cultural, emotional, and social – influence a student's ability to learn. Understanding these factors can help the IEP team to develop statements of strengths and needs.

The student's strengths can be used to address his or her weaknesses. Identifying these strengths is essential for appropriate program development.

Statements of the student's strengths and needs should be recorded in the IEP form. The basis of these statements should be the description, contained in the IPRC's statement of decision, of the student's strengths and needs and any recommendations the IPRC may have made about programs and services.

The IEP's statements of the student's strengths and needs should describe observable factors that influence the student's learning and areas in which the student demonstrates significant strengths or the need for significant support. They should not describe the programs, services, or strategies that will address needs. It is the cluster of the needs described in these statements that should provide a clear understanding of the type of program required by the student. For example, statements of strengths and needs might complete the following sentences:

- This student demonstrates a significant strength in ...
- This student requires significant instruction/support to ...

Examples of needs statements include the following:

- This student requires significant instruction/support to ...
 - communicate with others (using communication aids such as Braille, sign language, alternative/augmentative systems, etc.);
 - develop and maintain motor skills (fine motor skills, gross motor skills, etc.);
 - orient himself or herself and move from place to place independently;
 - develop independence in daily living (skills and routines involved in using a toilet, dressing, eating, etc.);
 - control self-abusive behaviour;
 - demonstrate organizational skills;
 - demonstrate decision-making and problem-solving skills;
 - solve multi-step problems requiring numerical answers;
 - develop reading skills (phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, Braille skills).

Identify Goals and Expectations

Writing goals and expectations is part of the IEP process. Written goals and expectations:

- provide the student with a focus and motivation for his or her learning;
- help teachers develop learning activities that are specifically related to the strengths, interests, and needs of the student;
- enhance accountability by providing everyone with a point of reference against which to measure achievement;
- facilitate communication between the team and the parent/student;
- facilitate collaboration.

Goals

The goals set out in the IEP should be based on the strengths and needs of the student. They constitute the best prediction of what the student should be able to accomplish in a program area by the end of the school year.

Goals are targets, not promises. They may reflect the overall expectations in Ontario's curriculum policy documents or a modified version of the overall expectations, or they may be alternatives developed to reflect the student's individual strengths and needs. Although goals should indicate the level of performance to be achieved by the end of the school year, some goals may be achieved sooner and some may take more than a year. Because some students may show extraordinary progress and some may experience a delay in progress at certain times, goals may require modification as the year goes on.

Goals must be written for each subject, course, or skill area to which the student's IEP applies. They are written to address specific subject areas, such as language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and fine arts, or skill areas, such as vocational skills, gross motor development, perceptual motor skills, and social skills. Goals may also address the depth and breadth of the program and the pace of learning.

Examples of goal statements include the following:

- This student will ...
 - display appropriate on-task behaviour during independent work periods;
 - use correctly the conventions of spelling, grammar, and punctuation with the support of print and electronic resources;
 - develop reading comprehension skills at a Grade [*specify grade*] level;
 - demonstrate coherent organization of ideas in final drafts of written work;
 - identify and be able to use [*specify number*] PIC-symbols;
 - dress himself or herself independently;
 - compose stories at a Grade [*specify grade*] level;
 - apply critical-thinking skills to comprehend, describe, and solve problems;
 - improve basic work skills through on-site work experience;
 - demonstrate knowledge of how his or her hearing aid works and assume responsibility for the care of it;

- develop his or her ability to use figurative language through the use of idioms, similes, metaphors, and proverbs;
- gain independence in simple routines.

Expectations

Expectations are statements that identify the knowledge and skills the student should develop or be able to demonstrate. They represent the learning a student requires to move from his or her current level of achievement to his or her learning goal. The achievements reported on the provincial report card are directly related to these expectations.

Expectations can be written to cover an approximately six- to eight-week or standard reporting period in the school calendar, but they should be reviewed and updated as necessary. When expectations are changed or added, they should be dated.

Exceptional pupils should be given every opportunity to achieve the learning expectations set out in the Ontario curriculum policy documents. In fact, the expectations for most exceptional pupils will be the same as, or similar to, those in the Ontario curriculum. However, as with the goals discussed above, they may be modified from those in curriculum policy documents or they may be alternatives developed to reflect the individual student's strengths and needs.

Expectations could be:

- the same as the appropriate grade expectations in the Ontario curriculum, but with accommodations (supports or services that help the student gain access to the curriculum and demonstrate learning);
- differentiated, as in gifted programs;
- selected from the Ontario curriculum, but with modifications (changes to the grade-level expectations) or accommodations; or
- alternative expectations, modified so extensively from those in the Ontario curriculum that, in effect, the curriculum's expectations do not form the basis for the program area.

Examples of statements of expectations include the following:

- This student will ...
 - identify the main idea and supporting details in a story;
 - read and write numerals from 1 to 10;
 - complete a two-piece puzzle;
 - manage zippers, snaps, and Velcro fasteners;
 - write coherently, organizing ideas logically and creatively;
 - use strategies to proofread, edit, and correct work;
 - use communication skills in social settings with peers.

Regulation 181/98, clause 6(6)(b), requires the principal, in developing the individual education plan, to take into consideration any recommendations made by the committee (IPRC) or the Special Education Tribunal, as the case may be, regarding special education programs or services.

Regulation 181/98, subsection 6(4), requires that, where the pupil is 14 years of age or older, the individual education plan must also include a plan for transition to appropriate postsecondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living. Subsection 6(5) states that subsection 6(4) does not apply in respect of a pupil identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.

Regulation 181/98, subsection 6(7), requires the principal, in developing a transition plan, to consult with such community agencies and postsecondary educational institutions as he or she considers appropriate.

Determine Strategies and Resources

Strategies and resources for helping the student achieve his or her goals and expectations should be based on the information gathered and recorded in the IEP. When this section is being developed, the IPRC's statement of decision should be reviewed to ensure that any recommendations the committee made about special education programs or services are taken into consideration. However, the areas addressed in the IEP should not be limited to the suggested items in the IPRC's statement of decision.

The strategies and resources section of the IEP should identify the specific accommodations, human and material resources, and teaching methodologies and strategies required to facilitate the student's ability to acquire, store, and retrieve knowledge and skills. It should also indicate the intensity of the support required, and who is responsible.

Develop a Transition Plan

Some exceptional pupils may experience difficulty in making transitions from one grade level or course to another, from one school or school board to another, and from secondary school to postsecondary education, work, or community living. A detailed and coordinated transition plan, implemented well before the anticipated move, will help to prepare these students and assist them in making a smoother transition.

A good transition plan includes modifications to orientation and exit programs and links to postsecondary institutions, outside agencies, and community partners, to help students gain access to postsecondary options and the supports that will help them to take advantage of these options.

While transition plans are not required for students who are identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness, gifted students and students younger than 14 may also benefit from such plans.

In addition to consulting with community agencies and postsecondary institutions, those developing the transition plan should take account of any recommendations made by the IPRC about special education programs and services and should coordinate the transition plan with the student's annual education plan.

The following are some elements that a transition plan may cover. It is important to note that, as the transition plan is an integral part of the IEP, there may be relevant elements appearing elsewhere in the IEP. The transition plan itself must specify:

- specific goals for the student's transition to postsecondary activities. The goals must be realistic and must reflect the strengths, needs, and interests of the student;
- the actions required, now and in the future, to achieve the stated goals. The actions identified must build on the student's identified strengths, needs, and interests;

- the person or agency (the student, parents, educators, providers of specialized support and services, community agencies) responsible for or involved in completing or providing assistance in the completion of each of the identified actions;
- timelines for the implementation of each of the identified actions.

In the event that a student is receiving support from a service provider funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), IEP planning needs to be linked to the MCSS planning process outlined in the January 1998 MCSS document *Individual Support Agreement for People With Developmental Disabilities*. With the parents' permission, the IEP may constitute the educational component of the agreement.

It should be noted that, with the establishment of Making Services Work for People, a new framework for children and people with developmental disabilities introduced by MCSS, families and individuals seeking support and services are able to obtain accurate information from one source. MCSS area offices can provide school board personnel with more information regarding this initiative, and with local contacts.

Establish a Monitoring Cycle

Monitoring of the student's progress in meeting the expectations and achieving the goals will be most effective if it occurs on a regular, cyclic basis. All those involved in providing programming for the student have an important role to play in reflecting on the student's achievement and the appropriateness of the modifications, accommodations, strategies, and resources being used.

The teacher responsible for monitoring the student's progress and updating the IEP, in collaboration with other team members as appropriate, should:

- identify the criteria for evaluating the program developed for the student (for example, the criteria could include collection of data from a variety of sources to enable the team members to determine the student's level of achievement and make judgements, recommendations, and decisions about future programming);
- establish times to monitor and assess the student's achievements and progress relative to the expectations and goals set out in the plan;
- summarize and record, with dates, at least once per reporting period, the student's progress towards meeting the expectations;
- record and document changes in the IEP, noting the dates of the changes;
- make the necessary adjustments to the student's IEP and in the student's programming.

See the section entitled "Phase 5: Review and Update the IEP", page E24, for additional recommendations about monitoring procedures, including meetings to review and update the student's plan.

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENT THE IEP

Regulation 181/98, subsection 6(8), as amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01, requires the principal, within 30 school days after placement of the pupil in the program, to ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is age 16 or older, the pupil.

Share the IEP With the Student, Parent, School Staff, and Other Professionals

Once the IEP is developed, the IEP team should ensure that everyone involved with the student is aware of its contents. The team should:

- review the IEP with the principal;
- meet with all appropriate staff to discuss how the activities described in the IEP will be implemented, the responsibilities associated with the plan, and how the plan will be monitored;
- meet with the parents and the student to explain and discuss the contents of the IEP and the monitoring plan and to discuss parental involvement in support of the plan.

Put the IEP Into Practice

Appropriate members of the team should implement the IEP by:

- translating the IEP into daily plans for learning, based on the student's individual interests, strengths, needs, and achievement levels;
- determining the individual timetables of educational assistants and support staff involved with the student on a daily basis;
- using organizational groupings, learning strategies, and resources that will help the student to achieve the goals and expectations specified in the plan;
- following the monitoring plan to evaluate the student's achievements and progress towards meeting the goals and expectations specified.

Continuously Evaluate the Student's Progress

As noted in the earlier section on the monitoring cycle, a formal review and update of the IEP should take place at least once every reporting period.

However, team members should continuously monitor, assess, and evaluate the student's progress to determine if program and teaching adjustments are necessary. They should:

- view the IEP as a working document;
- use a variety of techniques to assess the student's progress, selecting assessment strategies that can be used naturally in the context of classroom learning;
- develop and implement a system for recording the student's demonstrations of learning.

Adjust Goals, Expectations, and Strategies as Necessary

If the student is not meeting the expectations and goals, the plan may need to be adjusted by:

- developing new expectations, if learning is proceeding at a faster rate than had been anticipated by the plan;
- breaking expectations into smaller steps, if learning is proceeding at a slower rate than had been anticipated by the plan;
- altering the strategies, resources, or level of support.

See the next section, "Phase 5: Review and Update the IEP", for more recommendations about reviewing and updating procedures.

PHASE 5: REVIEW AND UPDATE THE IEP

Update the IEP Periodically

Those who are involved in monitoring the student's achievements and progress and reviewing and updating the IEP may wish to consider the questions in Figure E.3 in determining whether program and teaching adjustments are necessary and, if so, what they should be.

They may also want to refer to all the previous phases of the IEP process and reconsider the activities involved in them, in order to ensure that every factor has been taken into account and every step followed. (See Figure E.2, "Overview of the IEP Process", on page E7.)

In the course of monitoring a student's progress, members of the team may wish to hold a meeting to review and update the student's IEP. Figure E.4 is a sample form for recording an IEP update meeting. Teachers may modify or adapt the sample for their own use.

Figure E.3: Sample Questions for an IEP Review

Questions to Consider in Reviewing a Student's Achievements and Progress

- ❓ Is the IEP still an accurate reflection of the student's programming needs?
- ❓ How effective are the strategies and resources selected to support the student's learning? Should changes be made?
- ❓ How much progress has the student made towards achieving the goals and meeting the expectations set out in the plan? Is the assignment of responsibility effective for achieving the goals? If not, what changes should be made?
- ❓ Is there any new information that suggests changes should be made in the student's programming? Should additional information be gathered?
- ❓ Should new goals be selected and new expectations created to reflect more accurately the student's changing strengths, needs, and interests?
- ❓ Is the student demonstrating a sense of responsibility for his or her learning?
- ❓ Does the student's family have the necessary information and other supports to assist the student in meeting goals and expectations as set out in the IEP?

Figure E.4: Sample Form for Recording an IEP Update Meeting

IEP UPDATE MEETING

Student's Name: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

In Attendance: _____

Review goals and expectations (clarify goals and expectations, determine changes and adjustments needed):

Develop new expectations (based on the rate at which the student is learning and new circumstances that may have arisen):

Review and evaluate the programming, strategies, resources, and services used to date:

Comments:

Responsibilities:

Regulation 181/98, section 8, requires the principal to ensure that the Individual Education Plan for a pupil is included in the pupil's Ontario Student Record, unless a parent of the pupil has objected in writing.

Review and Update the IEP at the End of Each Reporting Period and When the Student Transfers to Another School

A student's IEP must be included in his or her OSR unless the parent has objected in writing.

The requirement to store a student's IEP in his or her OSR ensures that the student's relevant medical information, details of the student's strengths, needs, and specific learning expectations, and information about the special education programs, services, strategies, and resources used to help the student learn are immediately available to teachers new to working with the student – for example, when the student moves to a higher grade or transfers to another school.

To ensure that the IEP stored in the OSR is up to date, at the end of each reporting period and when the student transfers to another school, the IEP team should meet to update the IEP (including the student's transition plan) and to add written recommendations. Providing recommendations about proven methodologies and materials, equipment, and strategies that were particularly effective will help to ensure continuity in programming for the student.

Information that might be summarized in the IEP at the end of a school year includes the following:

- successes and growth that occurred in the year under review;
- instructional strategies and materials that worked particularly well;
- support services (personnel, equipment, materials) and level of intensity that continue to be required;
- challenges that arose and that may continue to require attention;
- goals that continue to require focus.

If the expectations set out in the plan have been met and the goals achieved, the following questions might be asked:

- What level of special education support or related services is now required?
- What does the student need to learn next?

An effective way to provide continuity in programming is through communication between the student's current teacher and the receiving teacher. When students move from the elementary panel to the secondary panel, guidance and special education staff should also be included in the discussions.

The following procedures are recommended for the sending and receiving teachers:

Sending teachers should:

- ensure that all current and relevant information is in the student's OSR (updated IEP, most recent progress reports, and assessment reports);
- meet with other members of the student's IEP team (guidance staff, special education staff, appropriate teachers, support staff) before transition periods (e.g., the beginning of each semester in secondary schools; when the student changes schools) to summarize recommendations;
- share the IEP with the receiving teacher (keeping in mind the privacy requirements mentioned earlier);
- learn as much as possible about the new program to help prepare the student for the move;
- encourage the student and his or her parents to visit the new setting in advance and, in the case of transition to a secondary school, to meet with the special education department head and guidance staff at the secondary school.

Receiving teachers should:

- check the documents in the student's OSR, especially the IEP and the IPRC's statement of decision;
- review with the student his or her annual education plan;
- invite the student to visit the new setting in advance.

The sending and receiving teachers should arrange for the student to tour the new site and spend some time in the classroom or with special education or guidance staff. At the secondary school level, special education and/or guidance staff can facilitate this process.

Store the IEP in the Ontario Student Record

As noted above, the up-to-date IEP, with recommendations, must be stored in the student's OSR, unless a parent of the student objects in writing.

Figure E.5 is a sample checklist for the IEP process.

Figure E.5: Sample IEP Process Checklist

IEP Process Checklist

- Assign primary responsibility for the IEP

Gather Information

- Review the student's records (including the previous IEP and the IPRC statement of decision)
- Consult with the student, parent, school staff, and other professionals
- Observe the student
- Review the student's current work
- Conduct further assessments, if necessary
- Consolidate and record information

Set the Direction

- Establish a collaborative approach (including the student and parent)
- Establish roles and responsibilities

Develop the IEP

- Identify and record the student's strengths and needs
- Identify goals and expectations
- Determine strategies and resources
- Develop a transition plan
- Establish a monitoring cycle

Implement the IEP

- Share the IEP with the student, parent, school staff, and other professionals (providing a copy to the parent and to the student, if age 16 or older)
- Put the IEP into practice
- Continuously evaluate the student's progress
- Adjust goals, expectations, and strategies as necessary

Review and Update the IEP

- Update the IEP periodically (at least once per reporting period)
- Review and update the IEP at year end and when the student transfers to another school
- Store the IEP in the Ontario Student Record