

# Individual Education Plan (IEP)

RESOURCE GUIDE

1998

# IEP

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# INTRODUCTION

Section 1 of the Education Act defines a special education program as “an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil.” The term “special education services” is defined as “facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.”

In Regulation 181/98, entitled 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 days of the student being placed 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

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 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 pupil's Ontario Student Record (OSR)], unless a parent of the pupil has objected in writing.

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

This resource guide will form part of the revised *Special Education Information Handbook* when it is published. This guide has been prepared to assist boards and schools as they implement the requirements for IEPs that are set out in Regulation 181/98.

This guide contains advice and tips that are 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 or modify them to suit individual circumstances.

The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training thanks and acknowledges the contribution to this guide of Alberta Education, whose binder *Programming for Students with Special Needs, Individualized Program Plans, 1995* provided a basis for this guide. Material from the binder is used by permission of Alberta Education, as represented by the Minister of Education, and the Special Education Branch.

# WHAT IS AN IEP?

An IEP is a written plan. It is a working document which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that pupil'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 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 sample IEP form is provided in Appendix A.

This guide recommends that a student's IEP 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 parents,<sup>1</sup> 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;

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1. When used in this document, the word "parent" includes guardian.

- an ongoing record that ensures continuity in programming; and
- 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; or
- a daily plan.

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

**Figure 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 access 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), requires the principal, within 30 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 exceptional pupils. This guide recognizes that, 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 first assign to one teacher the primary responsibility for co-ordinating the development, implementation, and monitoring of the student's IEP.

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

The IEP process involves the following five phases:

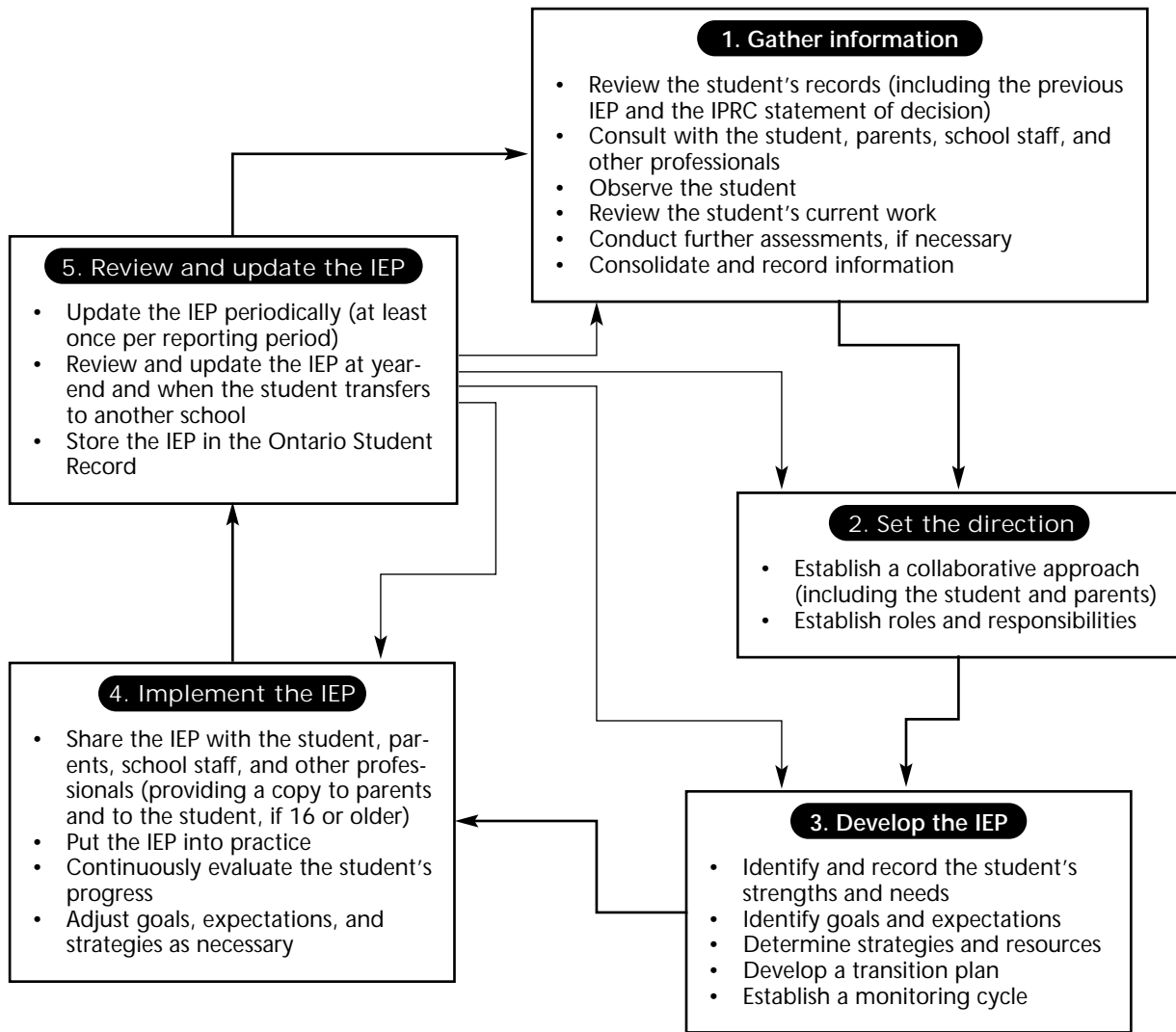
1. Gather information
2. Set the direction
3. Develop the IEP
4. Implement the IEP
5. Review and update the IEP

Figure 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 graphic 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 2.

**Figure 2: Overview of the IEP Process**

The IEP Process

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



# PHASE 1: GATHER INFORMATION

Much of the information described below may be in the student's previous IEP, which is 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 it 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 program and services; the student's OSR and previous IEP; the student's current work; consultations with parents, teachers, and others who know the student; observations of the student; and, for students in Grade 7 and beyond, beginning in September 1999, the student's annual education plan. Several of these sources are discussed in detail below.

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.

## 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 interpretative reports;
- the student's previous IEP; and
- previous report cards.

Consult with the Student, Parents, 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 parents, in-school staff, support personnel, and representatives of outside agencies or services. Some sources who should be consulted are discussed below.

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 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

### **Parents**

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

### **Students**

To the nature and degree 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.

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 release of personal information.

Principals and teachers should consult with their boards' freedom-of-information co-ordinators 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.

### **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**

Consult the following people for information as necessary and appropriate:

- school administrators
- counsellors
- teacher-advisors (beginning in September 1999 as part of secondary school reform)
- 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 alternative formats to print; approaches new tasks; persists with tasks; interacts with others; organizes himself or herself, his or her time, and materials; uses language; performs individually and in group activities; and responds to cues (including auditory, visual, and direct and indirect verbal cues);
- the effect on the student's learning of environmental variables such as lighting, sound, temperature, the physical arrangement of the classroom, colour, time of day, and routines and schedules; and
- 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.

Teachers may wish to record their observations of students in a variety of ways: 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 and peers, 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 plan and implement programming. If it is sufficient, no further assessments may be necessary. If the information is insufficient, individual assessments should be conducted to complete the data on the student.

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 parents. 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 (see sample form in Appendix A). 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

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 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

### 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 providing input to the development of the IEP and monitoring the effectiveness of selected strategies and resources, a team approach is recommended.

The *Special Education Information Handbook* will contain information on 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-advisor (beginning in September 1999 as part of secondary school reform), 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 teacher and support person 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:

- thoroughly understand 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; and
- contribute to decisions about integrating support services into the classroom.

## Establish Roles and Responsibilities

Although the principal should assign to one teacher the primary responsibility for co-ordinating 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.

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

### **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 days of a student's placement in the program;\*
- ensures that IEPs are implemented, evaluated, and updated at least once per reporting period;
- ensures that the recommendations of the IPRC (with respect to special education program and services, e.g., support personnel, resources, equipment) are taken into account in developing the IEP;\*
- ensures that parents and the student, if he or she is 16 years of age or older, are consulted in the development of the IEP;\*
- consults, in the preparation of a transition plan, 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 he or she is 16 years of age or older;\* and
- ensures that the updated IEP is stored in the OSR, unless a parent of the student objects in writing.\*

### **Classroom Teacher**

- collaborates in the IEP process;
- provides input 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;
- develops strategies for assessing and communicating the student's progress; and
- maintains ongoing communications with the student's parents, other teachers, and other professionals involved with the student.

### **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; and
- maintains ongoing communications with the student's parents and other teachers.

### **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; and
- maintains ongoing communications with the student's teachers.

As noted above, principals and teachers should consult with their boards' freedom-of-information co-ordinators 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.

### **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 communications with the student's teacher and the IEP team; and
- conduct assessments as necessary, with informed parental consent.

### **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; and
- considers his or her IEP when developing and reviewing an annual education plan (students in Grade 7 and on, beginning in 1999 as part of secondary school reform).

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 16 years of age or older, the pupil. Subsection 6(8) requires the principal, within 30 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.

The nature and degree of a student's involvement in the IEP process will vary. However, members of the IEP team should ensure 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 — 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 learning. As part of the self-assessment process, students should, where possible, fill in page 3 of the provincial report card.

### **Parents**

- collaborate in the IEP process;
- advocate for their child's best interest;
- provide up-to-date medical information 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; and
- 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:

- ensuring that, as required by Regulation 181/98, parents are sent a copy of the IEP;
- communicating openly and regularly with parents in language that is 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 written communication 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); and
- clarifying information where necessary to ensure that parents understand their child's IEP and the IEP process.

## 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 develop statements of strengths and needs. A detailed description of these factors will be included in the *Special Education Information Handbook*.

The student's strengths can be used to address his or her weaknesses. Understanding and noting them is critical to 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 programming responses required for 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 communications 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; and
- develop reading skills (phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, Braille skills).

### Identify Goals and Expectations

Writing goals and expectations should be part of the IEP process. The benefits of written goals and expectations include the following points. They:

- provide the student with a focus and motivation for his or her learning;
- help teachers develop learning activities that are specific 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 team-parent/student communication; and
- 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 can be 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.

Examples of goal statements include the following:

- This student will ...
  - display appropriate on-task behaviour during independent work periods;
  - use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation conventions 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-draft writing;
  - 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 project 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 access 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 communications skills in social settings with peers.

#### 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.

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.

Information about specific accommodations and strategies can be found in the "Special Education Guide" of the *Electronic Curriculum Unit Planner* and will be included in the *Special Education Information Handbook*.

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.

## Develop a Transition Plan

Some exceptional pupils may experience difficulty 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 prepare these students and assist them in making a smoother transition.

A good transition plan includes modifications to orientation and exit programs and linkages to postsecondary institutions, outside agencies, and community partners, to help students gain access to postsecondary options and the supports that will help them 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 co-ordinate the transition plan with the student's annual education plan (beginning in September 1999).

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 may specify:

- the student's strengths and needs;
- the student's specific transition goals;
- the actions required to achieve the goals; e.g.,
  - identification of current information about postsecondary education options (e.g., colleges and universities for students who are deaf; support services for learning and physical needs), work options, or community living options, as appropriate, to help the student and his or her family make informed decisions and determine their options;
  - arranging visits or placements to preferred options;
  - identification of specialized supports or services required (e.g., to support the student in the work placement);
  - identification of how the student will be assisted with the application and the transfer to the option selected;
  - identification of the supports and services the student will need in the new (post-school) setting; and
- the transition partners and responsibilities.

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 (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.

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 parent's 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, it is expected that by the spring of 1999, families and individuals seeking support and services will be 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 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 and updating the IEP, in collaboration with other team members as appropriate, should:

- identify the criteria for evaluating the programming 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; and
- make the necessary adjustments to the student's IEP and in the student's programming.

See the section of this guide entitled "Phase 5: Review and Update the IEP" 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), requires the principal, within 30 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.

Share the IEP with the Student, Parents, 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 appropriate staff to discuss implementing the activities described in the IEP, the responsibilities associated with the plan, and monitoring the plan; and
- 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, considering the student's individual interests, strengths, needs, and achievement levels;
- determining how programming plans for the student will be addressed daily, including the setting of individual timetables for educational assistants and support staff;
- using organizational groupings, learning strategies, and resources that will help the student 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;
- employ a variety of techniques to assess the student's progress, selecting assessment strategies that can be conducted 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; and
- altering the strategies, resources, or level of support.

See the next section of the guide 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 3 in determining if program and teaching adjustments are necessary, and what they should be.

They may also want to refer to all the previous phases of the IEP process, reconsider the activities involved in them, and ensure that every consideration has been taken into account and every step followed. (See Figure 2, Overview of the IEP Process, on page 8.)

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 4 is a sample form for recording an IEP update meeting. Teachers may modify or adapt the sample for their own use.

**Figure 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 more accurately reflect the student's changing strengths, needs, and interests?
- ❓ Is the student demonstrating a sense of responsibility for his or her learning?
- ❓ Is the student's family and home life supporting and reinforcing the goals and expectations for learning set out in the plan?

Figure 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 Year-End and When the Student Transfers to Another School

A student's IEP must be included in his or her OSR.

The requirement to store a student's IEP in his or her OSR ensures that the student's relevant medical information, strengths, needs, and specific learning expectations, as well as 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 the IEP stored in the OSR is up to date, at the end of each school year/semester and when the student transfers to another school, the IEP team should meet to update the IEP, including the student's transition plan, and add written recommendations. 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; and
- 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?
- Can the student articulate his or her strengths and needs?

An effective way to provide continuity in programming is 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 sending and receiving teachers:

### **Sending Teachers**

- ensure that all current and relevant information is in the student's OSR (updated IEP, most recent progress report, and assessment reports);
- meet with other members of the student's IEP team (guidance staff, special education staff, appropriate teachers, support staff) prior to transition periods (e.g., the beginning of each semester in secondary schools, when the student changes schools) to summarize recommendations;
- share with the receiving teacher (keeping in mind the privacy requirements mentioned earlier in this guide) information about the accommodations and equipment needed, the resources and strategies used for teaching and managing behaviour, and the amount of individual help the student received;
- 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**

- check the documents in the student's OSR, especially the IEP and the IPRC's statement of decision;
- communicate with the student's previous teachers and support personnel, gathering information that will help in understanding the student's strengths, needs, and program requirements (keeping in mind the privacy requirements referred to earlier in this guide);
- review with the student his or her annual education plan;
- invite the student to visit the new setting in advance.

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 5 is a sample checklist for the IEP process.

Figure 5: Sample IEP Process Checklist

### IEP Process Checklist

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- 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, parents, 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 parents)
- 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, parents, school staff, and other professionals (providing a copy to parents and to the student, if 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

# APPENDIX A: A SAMPLE IEP FORM

A sample IEP form is provided on the next three pages. Instructions for completing the form are given on the page following the form.

# Individual Education Plan

Student		I.D. #	
School Year	School		IPRC Date
Grade/Class	IPRC Identification		Date of Birth
Teacher(s)			IPRC Placement
IEP Initiation Date	Developed By		
Special Education Services Involved			
Personalized Special Instructional Equipment			
Related Health Issues			

Areas of Strength	Areas of Need
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

Program Description – level of support required (frequency and duration)	Assessment Data (date/source/results)
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

General Classroom Accommodations
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# Individual Education Plan

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## Instructions

### **IEP Initiation Date**

- indicate the commencement date of the program

### **Developed By**

- indicate the person(s) involved in developing the IEP (e.g., teacher, support personnel)

### **Special Education Services**

- record services, as defined in section 1 of the Education Act (e.g., resource and support personnel)

### **Personalized Special Instructional Equipment**

- indicate personalized equipment used by the student in the school setting

### **Related Health Issues**

- indicate medical conditions that may affect learning

### **Areas of Strength and Need**

- indicate the student's main strengths (talents, skills, interests) and needs, including those described by the IPRC

### **Program Description**

- indicate the percentage of curriculum modification, and of teacher and educational assistant support

### **Assessment Data**

- include related assessment data from informal and formal assessment, including date, source, and results

### **General Classroom Accommodations**

- indicate specific supports or services that will help the student access the curriculum and demonstrate learning

### **Program Area**

- identify the curriculum area of focus

### **Goal(s)**

- describe what the student might be expected to accomplish in a program area by the end of the school year

### **Current Achievement Level**

- indicate the current level of achievement in relation to program expectations

### **Methods of Progress Review**

- indicate the methods by which achievement will be reviewed and evaluated

### **Transition Plan**

- for students 14 years and older, indicate appropriate plans for postsecondary activities such as work, further education, community living
- for students changing panels, placement, or school, indicate an appropriate plan for smooth transition
- recommend successful practices for the next school year

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# IEP