A.12 Steps to School for Children With Special Needs

Steps to School

for

Children with Special Needs

Children may start school in September if they turn 4 (JK) or 5 (SK) by December 31 of that year. They are not legally required to attend school until age 6. You can choose whether or not to send your child to Junior or Senior Kindergarten.

You may change your mind at any time during the process; however, early planning provides time to put supports in place.

If your child has special needs, information about starting school is available at your neighbourhood school and early intervention services.

Discuss your child’s special needs and your options with your current service provider and with friends and family.

If you choose enrolment, contact the principal of your neighbourhood school to find out how and when to enrol your child in school. (January - March)

Tell the principal about your child’s special needs. The principal will arrange an opportunity for you to discuss ways the school might meet your child’s special needs.

You may be asked to provide your consent to the gathering and exchange of information between the preschool service system and school boards that would be helpful in planning for your child’s transition. (January - March)

You may want to attend the general information meeting organized in each area. At these meetings, information is shared about the school system, community agencies and the transition process. Meetings are usually held early in the year. (Contact your early intervention or therapy provider for the time and place.)

By the beginning of May, you should know what the next steps are for you and your child. Next steps may include one or more of the following:

A Special Education Consultant and/or other school board staff may visit your child at his/her child care centre or at your home.

A transition planning meeting may occur. You and the school will determine: the time, place and location of the meeting; who should be included in the meeting and the topics for discussion. If you choose to arrange this meeting yourself, you may request assistance from your early intervention worker or someone else involved with your child.

At the transition meeting, collectively, you will: agree on the next steps and general goals for your child; identify any additional supports your child may need; clarify roles and responsibilities for yourselves, school staff, and any others involved. You will receive a copy of a summary of the meeting and will be given the name of the contact person from the school.

Simcoe County District School Board

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

Simcoe County Early Intervention System
The school, through the principal, will make any agreed referrals to school board services and to the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). On receipt of the referral, the CCAC will send a letter confirming referral to begin the intake process. If you haven't received a letter within 3-4 weeks, call the CCAC.

Your child is in school.

If required, you will be invited to a planning meeting in the fall to develop an individualized plan for your child. You, or others, may request a meeting at any time, as needed.

If, at any time, you have questions or concerns, call your contact person from the school or another service provider.

THE TRANSITION PROCESS

- Families Explore Options: December
- The School Board Gets Enrolment Numbers: January
- Exchange of Information Consents Are Signed: February
- General Information Meeting For Parents: February/March
- School Person May Visit Preschool Program: April to June
- Transition Planning Meeting(s) May Take Place: Spring or Fall
- Your Child Starts School: September to December
- More Specific Goals Are Identified Through Follow Up

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Planning ahead helps with smooth transition to the school system.
- It is suggested that you start this process in January of the year you are thinking of enrolling your child in school (for September) to help provide lots of time for planning.
- The principal is your first contact at the school. He/she may assign another staff to be your contact within the school.
- Ask about the school’s information night for parents.
- Your school contact, family support worker, early intervention worker, or a friend may help you through this transition process and accompany you to meetings.
- Questions to consider and helpful hints in preparing your child for school are available from your school, Early Intervention Program, or Family Resource Centres.
- If you choose to register your child in school, you may wish to get involved in the school council.

Revised March 2004