

# Welcome *to* Special Education



## Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

*Engage, support and inspire all learners to achieve and succeed.*

# Growing Excellence... Inspiring Success



Grand Erie District School Board is committed to providing all students with the best education to help them reach their full potential. The Ontario Curriculum guides what educators teach, and current education research guides the way that it is taught in the class, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

However, some students need educators to do things very differently, to help them achieve and succeed. For many of these students, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is created.

More detailed information on an IEP can be found at the Ministry of Education's website: [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

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*“Engage, support and inspire all learners to achieve and succeed.”*

Grand Erie’s Mission Statement

*“We believe that our students should be considered first as the basis for decision-making.”*

Grand Erie’s Belief Statement

*“Growing Excellence... Inspiring Success.”*

Grand Erie’s Vision Statement

# Individual Education Plan (IEP)



## What is an IEP?

### An IEP describes:

- the student's strengths and needs
- the learning goals for the student
- the annual program goals (for students with modified/alternative curriculum learning expectations only)
- the learning expectations for the student
- the programs and services that the student will receive
- the information that describes what will be done by the school and the Board to help the student achieve his or her goals (these are called Teaching Strategies and Accommodations; Human Resources; Individualized Equipment)

## An IEP is not:

- a description of everything that will be taught to the student
- a just-in-time method of ensuring EQAO accommodations
- an educational program or set of expectations for all students
- a means to monitor the effectiveness of teachers
- a daily plan

For more information  
on Individual Education  
Plans go to:  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

## What can an IEP do for my child?

An IEP states how things will be done differently with the student, to help them learn and grow to their best potential. Here are just a few examples of ways the Board might work with a student to do things differently:

### Different ways to take in information

- A student who is hard of hearing or deaf might have an FM system to help them hear what the teacher says.
- A student with reading difficulty might have access to assistive technology, or have parts of the material read to them.

### Different ways to build skills

- A student with a learning disability might have extra practice sessions, or may be taught certain skills using a different method.
- A student with behaviour challenges might use a points system to help them build his coping skills.

### Different ways to show mastery of skills

- A student with writing difficulties might be able to type their work on a computer, or answer test questions verbally, or dictate their answers to a helper who writes them down.
- A student with slower processing speed might get more time to complete exams.

### Different learning goals

- A student with an intellectual disability or a student identified as Gifted might be working on material that is from a different grade level than their peers.
- A student with Autism Spectrum Disorder might be working to learn certain social skills or living skills, over and above their academic work.

## Different ways to participate in school activities

- A student with mobility challenges might use a walker for some activities and a wheelchair for others, and may have assistance for certain tasks.
- A student with ADHD might have a separate work space that is quieter and free from distractions for tests and assignments.

There is no complete list of all the things we can do to meet children's needs. New tools and strategies are being added all the time. All of them are focused on helping the child learn and perform to the best of his or her ability at school.

## Which students receive IEPs?

- An IEP must be created if a student is formally identified as "Exceptional" by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).
- An IEP may also be created by the school for a student who is not formally identified, but still needs to do things differently to learn or function at school. These ways of doing things differently are called Special Education services.

See the Grand Erie Welcome to Special Education IPRC Guide found at [granderie.ca](http://granderie.ca) for more information.

## Who is on the team to develop an IEP?

**Several people are on the IEP team. It usually includes:**

- The parents or guardians
- The student (if a student is 16 or over, the student must be given a chance to have input. If younger than 16, the student should still be consulted if possible)
- The principal
- The classroom Teacher
- The school's Learning Resource Teacher

**The team can also include:**

- Other Grand Erie Board professionals as needed (e.g., Teacher Consultant, Psychoeducational Consultant, Behaviour Counsellor, etc.)
- Other non-Board professionals as needed (e.g. Speech/Occupational Therapist, Pediatrician, etc.)

The IEP process is a collaborative one. The participants must combine their ideas, show respect for each other's points of view, be willing to try different approaches, and understand that schools must use the resources to support all students.

Once the IEP is developed, a parent or guardian reviews and signs it.

# Benefits of an IEP

## **I'm not sure if we want an IEP. How will it benefit my child?**

Parents may have some concerns about putting their child's learning challenges onto paper, and about sharing sensitive information with the school.

The focus of the IEP is not on weakness or diagnosis, but on what the student needs to achieve his or her best in the school environment. At a later date, an IEP can be ended if the team agrees that it is not needed any more.

An IEP is all about improving the quality of your child's education. An IEP removes barriers, adds supports, and encourages teamwork in helping the student achieve their full potential. If needed, it adds alternative curriculum, in areas like behaviour, self-help skills, social skills, etc. As a student enters high school, part of the IEP's job is to map out the transition to higher education, or a job, or community living, in order to plan for success in the next stage of the student's life.

## **What if my child doesn't have a medical diagnosis from a doctor?**

An IEP does not require a medical diagnosis.

# What is my part as a parent in the IEP process?

You are part of the IEP team; your participation is important.

You have a right to give input when the IEP is being developed and reviewed (so does your child, if 16 years old or older).

The goal of an IEP is success for your child. You can contribute a lot towards that goal by:

- Giving information about your child's likes, dislikes, personality, interests and talents
- Communicating positively and regularly with the school
- Talking about approaches that work well at home for your child
- Participating in team meetings
- Writing down what you want to talk about, or concerns you have, before the meeting
- Listening to what all team members are saying
- Asking for more information when you are not sure
- Giving your child a chance to practise skills at home
- Talking with your child about school

# Can we change the IEP once it's set up?

Children grow and change. The strategies and supports that work now need to be reviewed and updated regularly. You will receive a copy of the current IEP for review (and new input if you want to give it) within the first 30 days of the school year. The IEP is reviewed and updated each reporting period. However, you don't need to wait for this time if you have urgent concerns.

For a glossary of terms, visit the Special Education section under the Parent Tab at [granderie.ca](http://granderie.ca)

# Understanding the IEP



## What does an IEP look like? What's in it?

An IEP can look very complex — it is intended to cover all types of special needs, and all stages of schooling from kindergarten to the end of high school.

Use this section as a guide as you read through your child's IEP.

# Understanding the IEP

<b>Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Placement/Exceptionality</b>	If the student was formally identified by the IPRC as having one of the “exceptionalities” recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Education, then that will be noted here, along with what kind of classroom placement this student will have (regular class with some type of support, or self-contained classroom).
<b>Assessment Information</b>	This section lists the results of any current and relevant assessments done on your child, such as vision, hearing, speech/language, occupational, health, academic, psychological/psychiatric assessments, etc. If an assessment was done through the school system, it will be included automatically in the student’s file. If the assessment was carried out somewhere else, it is up to you to decide whether to supply some or all of the outside assessment to the school. Outside agencies cannot share this information with the school unless you give permission.
<b>Strengths and Needs</b>	This information helps the team choose the best strategies to help the student. Strengths can include the student’s learning-related interests, learning style, abilities and skills. Needs are areas where the student needs support and more development.
<b>Health Support Services in the School Setting</b>	These are the health services provided by health professionals that the student needs to help him attend school.

## Subject/Courses or Alternative Program

Whenever a student has an IEP, we need to specify what they will learn. For each subject, there are three options:

o **Accommodated** - Only the student is learning the same Ontario Curriculum as the other students in her grade, but needs to do some things differently to accomplish that. The IEP shows:

- teaching strategies and accommodations
- assessment methods and accommodations

o **Modified** - The student is not learning the same Ontario Curriculum as the other students in their grade. The student may be learning the Ontario Curriculum material at a different grade level, or they may be learning the same material, but in simpler or shorter form. If a student is learning a subject in Modified form, the IEP shows:

- current level of achievement
- learning expectations
- annual learning goals in that subject
- what strategies will be used to support the learning
- how the school will assess whether the goal has been reached

o **Alternative** - The student is learning social skills, self-help skills, behaviour skills, or other skills that are not part of the Ontario Curriculum. If a student is learning an Alternative Curriculum, the IEP shows:

- current level of achievement
- learning expectations
- annual learning goals in that subject
- what strategies will be used to support the learning
- how the school will assess whether the goal has been reached

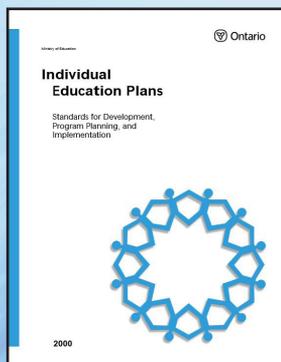
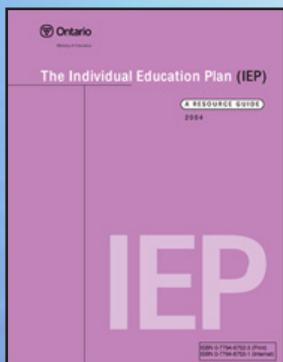
# Understanding the IEP

<b>Exemptions and Substitutions</b>	<p>If the student is exempt from certain parts of the Ontario Curriculum, or is having other material substituted for some part of it, then that is noted here.</p>
<b>Permitted Accommodations or Exemptions for Provincial Assessments</b>	<p>The provincial government has a list of accommodations that a student can use when writing a provincial assessment (e.g. EQAO). The ones that your child could use are noted here. Exemptions from provincial assessments are also noted here.</p>
<b>Secondary School Goal</b>	<p>If the student is in secondary school, this describes what they are working towards: an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, a Certificate of Achievement, or a Certificate of Accomplishment.</p>
<b>List of Accommodations</b>	<p>These are the strategies, the equipment, and the personal support that will be used to help the student learn, and show what has been learned. They may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <b>Instructional</b> - How we do things differently when we teach this student</li> <li>o <b>Environmental</b> - How we change the student’s working environment</li> <li>o <b>Assessment</b> - How we change the way that the student can show what he has learned</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting Dates</b>	<p>These are the dates when the student’s progress towards the IEP goals is reported to parents, and when the IEP is reviewed and changed (if necessary). They are usually the same as the dates when report cards are issued.</p>
<b>Program Goals</b>	<p>This section describes what the student can be expected to accomplish by the end of the school year.</p>

<p><b>Transition Plan</b>  (According to the Ministry of Education's Policy and Program Memorandum PPM 156, effective September 2014, all students with IEPs must have Transition Plans.)</p>	<p>If the IEP is for a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the Transition Plan maps out the support for all transitions inside the school and from grade to grade.</p> <p>If the IEP is for a student 14 years or older, the Transition Plan maps out the steps and supports that will help the student make a successful move to: postsecondary education, work, and/or community living.</p> <p>This item is not currently required for students who are identified as Gifted, with no other exceptionality.</p>
<p><b>Record of IEP Development, Consultations and Updates</b></p>	<p>This section shows who was involved in developing and then later reviewing and changing the IEP, and when. Your consultations and input should be included here.</p>



# Additional Resources



Individual Education Plans and additional resources are also available on the Ministry of Education website. [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

# What Organizations and Services are Available to Help Parents Whose Children Have Special Learning Needs?

To find out about services, community supports, and organizations that can help you and your child:

Individual Education Plans and additional resources are also on the Ministry of Education website.  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

- Call Grand Erie District School Board (519-756-6301 or 1-888-548-8878) and ask for the Superintendent of Special Education
- In Brantford/Brant County, call Contact Brant (519-758-8228) or visit to [contactbrant.net](http://contactbrant.net)
- In Haldimand-Norfolk, call Haldimand-Norfolk REACH (519-587-2441) or visit [hnreach.on.ca](http://hnreach.on.ca)

You can also ask your school principal about where to find help, information and support.

More information related to Special Education in Grand Erie can be found in the Special Education Section under the Parent Tab at [granderie.ca](http://granderie.ca)

## We're Here to Help!

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is mandated through the Education Act as a standing committee of the Board. SEAC members include parents who advise the Board on program and service delivery related to Special Education. Visit the SEAC section under the Parent Tab at [granderie.ca](http://granderie.ca) for contact information.

# Grand Erie... Your Choice in Education

- *Strong Values • Academic Excellence • More Programs, More Choices*
- *Safe and Inclusive Environments • Great Extra-Curricular Activities*

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Find out more about how we're making a difference for students... visit [granderie.ca](http://granderie.ca)

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"*Welcome to Special Education*" in the subject line.

