

# Welcome *to* Special Education



**Identification, Placement  
and Resource Committee (IPRC)**

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

# Some Children Have Exceptional Learning Needs



Some children, to reach their learning potential, need extra resources such as:

- Physical devices and supports (wheelchairs, hearing systems, etc.)
- Support services delivered in the school
- Changes to the curriculum
- Different learning environments/teaching methods/classroom settings
- Various other supports

A child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) describes the specific combination of supports and strategies that will be used to help the child.

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The Identification, Placement and Resource Committee (IPRC) edition of the Welcome to Special Education series provides information about the IPRC process. The document represents a summary of information, provided in Ontario Regulation 181/98, and should be read in conjunction with this Regulation. If any discrepancy exists between this document and the Regulation, the information in Regulation 181/98 applies. For more information, visit the Special Education section at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

# How Does the Board Decide Which Students Qualify as Exceptional?

The Ontario Ministry of Education has a list of “Exceptionalities”, in the areas of behaviour, intellectual, communication, and physical. For the complete list, ask your principal, or check the Ministry of Education website at [edu.gov.on.ca](http://edu.gov.on.ca).

Every Ontario school board has special committees that consider each child’s exceptionality. These committees are responsible to do the following:

1. Decide whether that child meets the criteria for one (or more) of those exceptionalities
2. Determine that child’s specific needs and strengths
3. Choose the best classroom environment to meet the child’s needs, which could be one of:
  - Regular Class with Indirect Support, or Resource Assistance,  
or Withdrawal Assistance
  - Self-contained Placement
4. Review the identification and placement at least once every school year

These committees, and the process of being considered by them, are called the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (also known as IPRC).

## Who is on the IPRC?

The IPRC team members vary slightly, depending on the situation. They can include:

- The school principal and a second principal
- The learning resource teacher/classroom teacher
- Teacher consultant – special education

## How Does my Child get Considered by an IPRC?

You write a letter to your principal asking for an IPRC meeting for your child, or your principal asks for an IPRC meeting for your child based on input and assessments from teachers. The principal will inform you that this request has been made.

## How Will I Find out About an Upcoming IPRC Meeting about my Child?

Within 15 days of the request for an IPRC (by you or by your principal), the principal will give you a copy of this guide, and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

At least 10 days before the IPRC meeting, the chair of the IPRC will send you written notice of the meeting; it tells you where/when the meeting will be and asks you to say whether you will attend.

Before the meeting, you will also receive written copies of any information that the IPRC has received on your child (e.g. assessments, updated IEP or a summary of information). The IPRC will run smoothly if you can also tell your school principal what information you want to bring forward about your child.

## Can I Come to the IPRC Meeting? Can my Child?

You are not only legally entitled to take part, you are also welcome as an important participant in the process. Your child is also entitled to attend if they are 16 or over; if they are younger than 16 they may attend if they are with you. The IPRC makes the final decisions on identification and placement, but you can take part in discussions, and be present when the decisions are made.

## Who Else can Come to an IPRC Meeting?

The principal of your child's school and your child's teacher (if they are not on the IPRC) can come, and other resource people such as special education staff, Board support staff and community agency representatives; all of them can provide extra information.

You may also have a representative – someone who will support you, or speak on behalf of you or your child. You may also have an interpreter if you need one. Both you and your principal can put in a request for additional people to attend the IPRC meeting.

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# **What if I Can't Come on the Date Scheduled for the Meeting?**

## **What if I Don't Want to Come to the Meeting?**

If you can't come on the date scheduled, contact your school principal as soon as possible to arrange an alternative time.

If you don't want to attend the meeting, use the instructions in the IPRC notification letter to let the IPRC know that you will not be attending. If your school principal is not the IPRC contact, let him/her know as well. As soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will send you a written statement of the IPRC's identification and placement decisions, and any recommendations for Special Education programs and services for your child. You will be expected to review, agree or disagree, and sign the statement.

## **What Will Happen at the IPRC Meeting?**

The goal of the meeting is to:

- Decide whether your child qualifies as "exceptional" under the categories set by the Ontario Ministry of Education
- Identify your child's strengths and needs
- Choose the best classroom placement for your child
- Recommend any additional supports and services for your child

At the meeting:

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting
- The IPRC reviews all the information available about your child, which may include:
  - o Any educational assessments which have been done on your child
  - o (If permitted under the Health Care Consent Act, 1996) Any health or psychological assessment of your child performed by a qualified practitioner, if the IPRC feels that this information is required for the IPRC process
  - o Asking your child for their input (they must have your consent if your child is under 16)

- The IPRC reviews and discusses any recommendations which have been made about possible Special Education placements or services for your child
- You (and your child if they are 16 or older) can feel free to ask questions and contribute to the discussion
- When the discussion is finished, the IPRC makes its decisions

## **What Will NOT Happen at the IPRC Meeting?**

More in-depth discussions about specific learning expectations in the IEP, transition planning, high school options, etc. These topics are best discussed at the school with the classroom teacher and/or learning resource teacher.

## **How Does the IPRC Choose a Classroom Placement for my Child?**

The IPRC's placement decisions are based on choosing the least restrictive most enabling environment for learning.

If the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class (with Special Education services delivered in that environment) can meet your child's needs, then it will recommend a regular class placement.

If the IPRC decides on a Special Education class placement, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

## **What If I Do NOT Agree with the IPRC's Decision?**

You can request a second meeting for the IPRC to discuss your concerns.

- You must notify the IPRC that you want a second meeting within 15 days of receiving the written statement of decision. A second meeting of the IPRC will take place and you may present your concerns.



You can file a notice of appeal within 30 days of receipt of the written statement of decision with the Grand Erie District School Board addressed to the Director of Education. The notice of appeal must include the decision with which you disagree, and a statement describing your reasons for disagreeing. You must file notice of appeal within a specific time period after receiving the decision:

- If you do NOT request a second IPRC meeting, you must file the notice of appeal within 30 days of receiving the first statement of decision.
- If you DO request a second IPRC meeting, you must file the notice of appeal within 15 days of receiving the statement of decision from the second meeting.

If you do not sign and return the consent agreeing with the IPRC decision, but you do not appeal it, the Board will instruct your school principal to implement the decision.

## What Happens if I Request an Appeal?

Grand Erie District School Board establishes a Special Education appeal board, comprised of three persons who have no prior knowledge of your case. One of the three is selected by you, the parent.

The chair of the appeal board arranges for a meeting to take place no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (except where parents and the school Board provide written consent for a later date).

The appeal board receives the same material reviewed by the IPRC, and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the case.

At the meeting, you (the parent) and your child (if he/she is 16 years or older), are entitled to be present for, and participate in, all discussions.

Within three days after the meeting, the appeal board must make its recommendations, in a written statement, to you and the school Board, including reasons for those recommendations. It may:

- Agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented

OR

- Disagree with the IPRC and recommend a different identification and/or placement for your child

Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's statement, the school Board must decide what action it will take in response to the recommendations. The school Board is not required to follow the appeal board's recommendations.

If you disagree with the school Board's response to the appeal board's recommendations, you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal, by writing a request for a hearing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information for making this application will be included in the appeal board's statement.

## Once the IPRC Decision is Made, What Happens Next?

When the IPRC decision is finalized (or the school Board makes its decision in response to the appeal board's recommendations), the school Board notifies the principal of your school to set up a Special Education Program for your child. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) describes the specific combination of supports and strategies that will be used to help your child.

## What is an IEP and What Will it do for my Child?

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a document that is developed by a team including your child's teacher, the learning resource teacher, and you, the parent. The IEP is the roadmap for your child's Special Education Plan, and includes the identification, placement and supports recommended by the IPRC.

## The Individual Education Plan

- Describes your child's unique strengths and needs
- Sets down the learning goals for your child this year
- Describes what supports, teaching methods, services, aids, and other resources will be used to help your child achieve their goals

## Once the IPRC Decisions are Carried out, can They Ever be Changed?

The IPRC's identification and placement decisions for your child must be reviewed once every school year. The committee obtains your written permission, reviews your child's progress and any new information, and decides whether to continue with the current arrangement or to recommend changes or a new decision.

## 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:

- 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 go to [contactbrant.net](http://contactbrant.net)
- In Haldimand-Norfolk, call Haldimand-Norfolk REACH (519-587-2441) or go to [hnreach.on.ca](http://hnreach.on.ca)

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

# Grand Erie...

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- *Strong Values • Academic Excellence • More Programs, More Choices*
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Fax: (519) 756-9181 Email: [info@granderie.ca](mailto:info@granderie.ca)

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"*A Parent's Guide to Special Education*" in the subject line.

