

FAMILY TIPSHEET:

Understanding School Supports



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There are many school supports available to help students succeed. This tipsheet will guide you on where to find important information and connect with the services that can support your child or student in their educational journey.

Key Topics of Interest

- Ministry of Education guidelines
- Individual Placement Review Committee (IPRC)
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Building parent/caregiver–teacher relationships
- Sharing information about your child
- Getting ready for kindergarten
- Getting ready for change - transition planning e.g. elementary school → high school, high school → college, university or work
- Teaching tips

Ministry of Education Guidelines

The Ministry of Education in Ontario helps ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, get the right support in school. These rules and guidelines explain how to create Individual Education Plans (IEPs), support students with special needs, and help schools provide a welcoming environment for everyone. Parents and caregivers can use these guidelines to learn more about their rights and the services available for their child.

Individual Placement Review Committee (IPRC)

The IPRC is a meeting where teachers, special education experts, and other staff decide if a student needs special education services. They also decide the best classroom setting for the child. Parents are invited to attend and share information. If you disagree with the decision, you can appeal it. To learn more about the IPRC, check your local school board's website.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An IEP is a plan created for students who need special education help. It describes the child's learning needs and the support they will get. Teachers, parents, and other helpers work together to create the IEP. It's reviewed once a year to make sure it's helping the child. Parents should be involved in this process to make sure their child's needs are met. For more details on IEPs, visit the Ministry of Education's website.

Building Parent/ Caregiver-Teacher Relationships

Having a strong relationship with your child's teacher is important. Good communication helps everyone work together for the child's success. You can share what you know about your child's strengths, challenges, and needs. This helps teachers provide the best support. It's also important to ask questions and share any concerns you have. When parents and teachers work together, children can have a better learning experience.

Sharing Information About Your Child

It's important to share helpful information about your child with their teachers. This can include things like your child's learning style, strengths, challenges, and any medical or emotional needs. By sharing this information, teachers can create a learning plan that works best for your child. Keeping communication open helps teachers support your child in the best way.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a big step for both children and parents. If your child has special needs, it's important to plan ahead. Talk to the school about the support they can offer, like special services or accommodations. You can also create an Individual Education Plan (IEP) if needed. Visit the school before the first day to help your child feel more comfortable. By preparing, you can help your child have a successful start.

Getting Ready for Change – Transition Planning

Transition planning helps students move smoothly from one grade to another, or even from school to the workplace. This can be moving from elementary to high school or high school to college or work. Transition planning helps students learn the skills they need for the next step, like job readiness or becoming more independent. Parents, caregivers, and teachers should work together to create a plan for the student's future.

Teaching Tips

Here are some helpful teaching tips for students with special needs:

1. **Give Clear Instructions:** Break tasks into small steps and give easy-to-follow instructions.
2. **Use Visual Aids:** Pictures, charts, and diagrams can help students understand better.
3. **Hands-On Learning:** Let students learn by doing activities that involve their hands.
4. **Structured Environment:** A predictable routine helps students feel safe and focused.
5. **Provide Breaks:** Give students short breaks during lessons to stay focused.
6. **Positive Reinforcement:** Celebrate even small successes to encourage more progress.
7. **Encourage Peer Interactions:** Group work can help students build social skills and feel included.




Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)






The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) helps school boards improve the education of students with special needs. The committee gives advice on special education programs. Parents and caregivers can contact their local school board for more information or to talk to a SEAC member.

School Trustees

Your school trustee represents you at the school board. They help make sure your child gets the support they need. If you have questions about services for your child, your trustee can help. To find out who your trustee is, contact your local school board. Many school boards have a list of trustees on their website.

Resources

Resource	Description	QR Code
<u>ConnectABILITY Parent's Educational Handbook</u>	A parent handbook to help with understanding special education in Toronto and to ensure the acceptance and belonging of children with additional learning support needs.	
<u>Autism Ontario – Educational Series: Navigating Special Education</u>	Are you a parent or caregiver seeking guidance on navigating the realm of special education within the school system? Autism Ontario invites you to join our panel discussion where experts will shed light on the crucial aspects of communication, relationship building, and your child's education rights.	
<u>CADDAC ADHD Resource Navigator</u>	CADDAC's ADHD Resource Navigator works with families and individuals affected by ADHD to identify ADHD and mental health resources in their communities.	

<u>Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Education Resources</u>	Our mission is to support and empower individuals with Down Syndrome and their families throughout the GTA. Through programs and resources, we are able to advocate, raise awareness and promote integration and participation within an inclusive community.	
<u>Easter Seals Kids At School</u>	A place where parents of children with physical disabilities can find information on school related issues	
<u>LD@Home</u>	LD@home is a resource designed to support parents, students, and families who are living with Learning Disabilities.	
<u>Special Needs Roadmaps</u>	Includes a Back to School Adventure that has tips on making this the best school year ever for yourself and your child	
<u>People for Education</u>	People for Education is an independent, charitable organization working to support and advance public education through research, policy, public engagement.	

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If you have any questions about this tipsheet, please contact resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca