

## Glossary

**Curriculum:** The province of Ontario has outlined the program, or curriculum, that must be followed to educate children at each grade level. The curriculum describes the expectations (skills and knowledge) that students must acquire as well as the achievement level (e.g., mark or grade). The curriculum is divided into different subject areas (e.g., Language, Mathematics, Social Studies) for both elementary and high school students.

**Differentiated Instruction:** Teaching strategies used to teach a range of learners. Includes strategies to adjust the content (what students are going to learn); the process (the activities to be used); and the products (the objects produced by the student). Can also include grouping students in pairs or small groups.

**Education Act:** The Education Act is the provincial law that governs education in Ontario. All school boards must operate according to this law. The Act includes:

- **Legislation:** These are overall laws, passed as Bills by government, regarding education.
- **Regulations:** These are made by the Minister of Education to expand on the Education Act and give more details about how the Act is to be applied.
- **Memoranda:** These are instructions issued to school boards. They are sub-divided into Policy-Program, Business and Safety. They are issued by the Deputy Ministers of Education and are required to be implemented.

**Educational Assistant (Educational Aide, Teaching Assistant, Pupil Aide):** This term describes staff hired by school boards to assist teachers in meeting the needs of individual students. Educational Assistants may work with individual or groups of students for part of or all of the school day.

**Exceptional Student:** According to Ontario law (the Education Act), an exceptional student is a student who has been formally identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). An exceptional student has significant needs in the area of behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical or multiple disability and meets the provincial and school board criteria for identification. A student who has been identified as 'exceptional' must be provided with the supports and services required to meet the exceptional needs.

**Hearing Impairment:** A full or partial loss of the ability to detect sounds. The inability to hear sounds, or distinguish among different sounds, will result in problems with speech and language development. 'Deafness' is the traditional term used to describe loss of hearing, but 'hearing impairment' is the preferred term that encompasses the fact there are different degrees of hearing loss.

**Language Impairment:** The Ministry of Education definition of the exceptionality is: A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
- b) include one or more of:
  - language delay;
  - dysfluency;
  - voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.

**Learning Disability:** The Ministry of Education definition of the exceptionality is: A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

- a) is not primarily the result of:
  - impairment of vision;
  - impairment of hearing;
  - physical disability;
  - developmental disability;
  - primary emotional disturbance;
  - cultural difference; and
- b) results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability with deficits in one or more of the following:

- receptive language (listening, reading);
  - language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating);
  - expressive language (talking, spelling, writing);
  - mathematical computations; and
- c) may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:
- a perceptual handicap;
  - a brain injury;
  - minimal brain dysfunction;
  - dyslexia;
  - developmental aphasia.

**Learning Support or School Team:** This team is led by the Principal or designate, and includes special education, classroom teachers and may include other professional staff. The purpose of the team is to plan for students with special needs within each school. Parents of children being discussed may be usually invited to attend the team meeting. These teams have various terms in different boards, (e.g., Program Development Team, In-School Team, School Based Support Team, etc.).

**Ontario School Record (O.S.R.):** This is the student file that contains all documents on your child. The contents of the OSR and access to the information are authorized by the Education Act. Report cards and assessment reports are kept in the OSR.

**Parent Guide:** Every school board is required to develop a guide for parents that outlines the IPRC process for determining whether a student is exceptional, deciding the student's placement and on how parents can appeal these decisions.

**Provincial Demonstration Schools:** The Ministry of Education operates special schools for children who are hearing or visually impaired, or severely learning disabled. Residential programs are offered at the schools for students who live too far from school to travel daily. For a list of Provincial Schools check the Ministry of Education Website.

**School Health Support Program:** This refers to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care program of the Community Care Access Centres that provides health services at school. The types of services provided include nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and dietician services.

**Special Education Advisory Committee (S.E.A.C.):** Every board is required to have a SEAC. This committee is composed of volunteers from parent associations, such as OAFCCD, as well as trustees. The purpose of this committee, which usually meets on a monthly basis, is to advise the school board on special education issues. Meetings are open to members of the public.

**Special Education Consultant or Co-ordinator:** This is usually a special education teacher who has responsibilities at the school board level to support special education. They may be responsible for supporting a number of schools, or for supporting services for a specific exceptionality.

**Special Education Program:** Educational programs that are based on, and modified by, the results of continuous assessment and evaluation, and, that include a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

**Special Education Services:** Facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

**Special Education, Student Support or Learning Resource Teacher:** Special education teachers have additional qualifications in the education of students with exceptional learning needs. Some special education teachers work with a specific group of students for the majority of the school day (e.g., learning disabled, language impaired, mild intellectual disability, etc.). In addition, special education teachers may also look after IPRC preparation, arrange case conferences, assist in ongoing assessment, evaluation and reporting, facilitate placements, and act as a liaison with community service providers.

**Speech Impairment:** The Ministry of Education definition of the exceptionality is: A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm and stress.