

### 3. EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

#### *Purpose of the Standard*

*To provide details of the board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies to the ministry and to the public*

In response to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 11, The Peel District School Board set up Early Identification Procedures. to "identify each child's level of development, learning abilities, and needs". The Early Identification Program was later modified to align with the Ministry 1998 document "The Kindergarten Years". This process in combination with other early identification procedures and intervention programs **are part of a continuous assessment and program planning process which is initiated when a child is first enrolled in school or no later than the beginning of a program of studies immediately following Kindergarten and continues throughout a child's school life"**

#### Guiding Principles

1. Language development is a major component of early identification. It is important, therefore, that procedures used be in English for an English speaking child and in French for a French speaking child. Where a child's language is other than English or French, a reasonable delay in the language based aspects of assessment should be considered.
2. Teachers in consultation with parents must strive to know each child as soon and as thoroughly as possible in order to provide learning opportunities that will help each child. It is imperative that children and their parents do not feel that they are in an "examination-test" situation when information related to the provision of learning opportunities is obtained. Where necessary other professionals may assist in this process.
3. A variety of strategies should be used to maintain an ongoing review of each child's emotional, social, intellectual and physical development.
4. Continuous assessment from different perspectives should be followed up with suitable programs that reflect what is known about each child at any point in time. Such programs should be provided in an environment wherein the child feels secure.
5. Information derived from assessment should be treated as tentative and temporary: it is not appropriate to use these data to predict children's long-term achievements.
6. Teachers may identify some children with special needs who require further assessment. Teachers should consult with other professional to determine appropriate learning programs.

The evidence suggests that "*children whose cognitive and behavioural characteristics are poorly developed in their early years have difficulty succeeding in the school system*" and that "*research has documented that early intervention is a critical factor contributing to the success of such children*". Based on these understandings Peel is involved in a variety of different programs in partnership with parents, Social Service agencies and

community services designed to identify and support young students with complex needs.

### Early Identification Process

Contact is maintained with pre-schools in the region to ensure that parents are aware of special education programs that are available and that board staff is aware of students with special needs prior to their beginning school. The co-ordinator of Special Programs speaks at information meetings to inform parents of the range of program options and types of support available for high needs students.

Kindergarten packages "Stepping into Kindergarten" are sent home in the spring to parents of all children beginning kindergarten in the fall. These packages contain several components designed to provide information to parents and to help them to work in collaboration with the school to promote a smooth transition into school. While recognizing that each child is unique, this information may assist parents to identify the learning needs of their child. Included is the Special Education Fact Sheet: "Getting to Know Special Education Programs and Services". In addition the registration process for kindergarten students provides an opportunity for the parent to share information with the school.

### Teacher's Role

Teachers engage in a continuous process of both formal and informal assessment and evaluation of students needs and progress which is communicated to parents. There are many formal and informal identification procedures and intervention strategies in place in Peel. Documentation on the more formal programs is included under Early Intervention Strategies. The teacher's role is described within this documentation as appropriate.

### Parent's role

Positive home school partnerships help to support student learning. In the spirit of joint responsibility for learning it is an expectation that parents participate in this partnership. Kindergarten registration is an opportunity for parents to share information with the teacher and may result in support beginning on school entry.

Itinerant support is available for high needs students as soon as they begin attending Peel schools. These students may or may not be referred to an IPRC but itinerant service continues if required. Itinerant teachers provide support for students who are:

- Blind/Low Vision
- Deaf/Hard of hearing
- Developmental Disabilities\*
- Autistic/PDD

### **Screening, assessment, referral, identification and program planning :Policies and Procedures**

Each classroom teacher monitors the progress of all students and identifies students of concern. To assist the process of supporting students of concern an **In-School Review Committee (ISRC)** which meets regularly, is established in every school. The ISRC helps to determine need and initiates the referral processes for screenings and

assessments. Speech-language pathologists, psychologist and social workers work as a team to resource the ISRC and assist in the problem solving process of supporting student needs. The following board support documents are included which outline the process in detail.

Operating Procedure Special Education Support Services 1 Committee	In-School Review
Special Education Programs Support Document	In-School Support Programs

**In keeping with the belief that the placement of students in a regular class is the first option,** classroom teachers make informal accommodations to teaching strategies, assigned work and evaluation methods in order to maximize success for all learners. The In School Review Committee and the In School Support Program assist in the development of such a differentiated learning environment and provide support in meeting the needs of both exceptional and non-exceptional students. The ISRC may also recommend referral to an IPRC. Referral to an IPRC follows an information gathering process which involves parents, the school and support personnel. Before receiving written notification of an IPRC referral, it is the responsibility of school personnel to review all information with parents. Included is the operating procedure which details the process for referring students to an IPRC (Special Education Support Services 3)

Other options for early intervention and program planning include:

- referral to early literacy programs run within schools,
- the provision of home support programs
- referrals to outside agencies for assessment and support for articulation, gross and fine motor development and sensory motor integration.

#### Communication with Parents

Ongoing communication with parents is one of the roles and responsibilities of teachers. Consultation with parents is to begin as soon as academic or behavioural difficulties arise. Parents are informed of student progress through both formal and informal processes. In addition to the official reporting periods teachers communicate with parents by newsletters, communication logs, e-mail, telephone conversations and personal interviews as required. This may result in a referral to the In School Review Committee for further consultation, program planning, screening or assessment. It is recommended that written permission be obtained from parents/guardians of students not being referred to an IPRC but who are to be involved in the In-School Support Program

#### Assessment Tools/Strategies

A wide range of assessment tools and strategies are used to help gather data to assist in the development of appropriate educational programs. These range from informal classroom observation by teachers and support staff to more formal standardized tests. Many supports are used or have been developed by the board to assist teachers in developing appropriate programs.

- First Steps Continuum (a developmental continua)
- Alpha Kids (literacy assessment tool)



6. Early Identification Program      Kindergarten Assessment Profile
7. Kindergarten Intervention Program
8. Families and School Together
9. Kindergarten Support Program
10. Kindergarten Language Transition Class
11. Primary Transition Program for Students with PDD/Autism
12. Itinerant Service: Program Description