



ONTARIO SCHOOL BOARDS
Parent & Caregiver Guide to the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) helps ensure your child can access learning, demonstrate understanding, and make progress at school.

1. What Is an IEP?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan that describes:

- Your child's strengths and learning needs
- The supports, accommodations, or modifications they receive at school
- Any alternative learning expectations if they differ significantly from the Ontario curriculum

☆ **Important:** An IEP is a working document. It can change as your child's needs change.

2. Who Needs an IEP?

A student may have an IEP if they:

- Have a formal exceptionality identified through an IPRC (Identification, Placement and Review Committee), or
- Require accommodations and/or modifications, even without a formal identification

Note: A diagnosis is NOT required to have an IEP.

3. When Is an IEP Created?

- **For students with an IPRC identification:** The IEP must be developed within 30 school days of placement.
- **For students without an IPRC:** The IEP is created when the school determines ongoing supports are needed.

Parents and caregivers should receive a copy of the IEP and be consulted during its development.

4. Key Parts of an Ontario IEP

A. Student Profile

Includes strengths (academic, social, emotional), areas of need, and relevant medical or assessment information (shared with consent).

B. Accommodations

Accommodations change **how** your child learns — not what they are expected to learn. These may be related to instructional, environmental or assessment accommodations.

Examples: Extra time for tests, preferential seating, use of assistive technology, visual schedules, frequent breaks.

C. Modified Expectations

Modifications change **what** your child is expected to learn. If expectations are modified, this must be clearly stated, and report cards will reflect modified expectations.

Examples: Working on Grade 4 math expectations in Grade 6; reduced number of expectations in a subject.

D. Alternative Expectations

Used when learning goals are outside the Ontario curriculum. These expectations appear on the IEP, not the provincial report card.

Examples: Social skills, self-regulation, communication, life skills.

E. Teaching Strategies & Supports

Describes how staff will help your child reach goals, such as:

- Small-group instruction
- Explicit teaching
- Visual supports
- Behaviour or regulation strategies

F. Assessment & Evaluation

Explains:

- How progress will be monitored
- How learning will be assessed fairly based on accommodations or modifications

5. Your Role as a Parent or Caregiver

You are a key partner in the IEP process. You know your child best — your voice matters. You have the right to:

- Be consulted in IEP development
- Receive and review the IEP
- Ask questions and request clarification
- Request a meeting to discuss concerns
- Share insights, strengths and needs about what works at home

6. Reviewing and Updating the IEP

- IEPs are reviewed at least once per reporting period.
- They should be updated when needs change, transitions occur (new grade, new school), or new assessments are completed.
- Parents and caregivers can request a review at any time.

7. IEPs and Report Cards

- **If your child has accommodations only:** Report cards are based on grade-level expectations.
- **If your child has modified expectations:** The report card will clearly state this.
- Alternative expectations are reported separately.

8. Common Questions

Does an IEP mean my child is in a special class?

No. Many students with IEPs learn in regular classrooms.

Can my child stop having an IEP?

Yes. If supports are no longer needed, the IEP can be discontinued.

What if I disagree with the IEP?

Start by discussing concerns with the classroom teacher or special education staff. You can request a meeting or escalate concerns through school administration if needed.

9. Tips for Parents & Caregivers

- ✓ Keep a copy of the IEP
- ✓ Ask for explanations in plain language

- ✓ Track what strategies work (and don't)
- ✓ Communicate changes at home that may affect learning
- ✓ Remember: progress looks different for every child

10. Where to Get More Support

- Your child's classroom teacher
- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
- School principal or vice-principal
- Your school board's Special Education Plan
- Community advocacy or parent support organizations

Final Note: *An IEP is not a label - it's a tool. When families and schools work together, it helps create a learning environment where students can feel supported, capable, and successful.*