




Special Education

# *Finding Your Way*

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# One Boy's Story


- ▶ Years of frustration and mis-diagnoses.
  - ▶ Low self-esteem
  - ▶ Needs time to heal.
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# Anjuli's Story


- ▶ On a very special journey.
- ▶ As parents we are privileged to travel with her.




# IEPs, Individual Education Plans

- ▶ An IEP is a written plan that describes the special education program and/or services needed by a student.
  - ▶ It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or are alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations.
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# When an IEP is implemented...

- ▶ Upon recommendation by the school team for students who access support regularly
  - ▶ If the child is in need of specific accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative programming to address their needs (i.e. physical, academic, emotional/behavioural)
  - ▶ Prior to an IPRC, strategies are usually put into place through the IEP.
  - ▶ An IEP is developed for every student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification Placement and Review Committee.
  - ▶ It is developed within 30 school days after placement of the student in a special education program.
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# Collaborative Development of the IEP

- ▶ **An IEP is developed collaboratively.**
  - ▶ **You know your child best.**
  - ▶ **Aim to build bridges, positive relationships when making suggestions.**
  - ▶ **Provide strengths**
  - ▶ **Provide needs**
  - ▶ **Monitor the IEP and your child's on-going progress.**
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# IPRCs, Identification, Placement, and Review Committee

- ▶ Students being considered for identification of an exceptionalty and special education programs and/or services may be presented to IPRCs.
  - ▶ A parent or school can request an IPRC.
  - ▶ Within 15 days of a written parent request, the principal must provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with a copy of the Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education and a written statement of approximately when the committee will meet.
  - ▶ At least 10 days before an IPRC meeting, parent/guardian must receive written notice of the time and place of the meeting.
  - ▶ Parent/Guardian must receive a copy of all documentation to be considered at the IPRC with the letter of invitation.
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# A Parent, An IPRC

- ▶ **This is an emotional process. Be kind to yourself as the day approaches.**
  - ▶ **Remember that the goal of the IPRC is to do what's best for your child, to aim for success.**
  - ▶ **They will consider reports, observations from the school and information that you provide. Organize yourself before the IPRC with information about your child's social, emotional, behavioral, psychological and academic strengths and needs.**
  - ▶ **Take notes or have someone come with you to take notes for you during the discussion.**
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# After the IPRC

- ▶ You can choose to wait to make decisions.
  - ▶ You can choose and weigh your options if a recommendation for placement is made.
  - ▶ Go to visit the program and then decide.
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# Communication

- ▶ **On-going communication is critical in ensuring that there is bridged support for your child.**
  - ▶ **Communication can take place in a variety of forms. e.g. meetings, calls, logs/books**
  - ▶ **Do not be afraid to ask questions.**
  - ▶ **Monitor your child's work, progress. Look at the work he/she is bringing home. Ask your child questions too.**
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# Do Your Homework

- ▶ **Know the disability**
  - ▶ **Find out as much as you can about the diagnosis you are dealing with.**
  - ▶ **Articulate it clearly to others**
  - ▶ **Make your son/daughter aware of it.**
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# Get Help

- ▶ **Don't try to do it alone.**
  - ▶ **Join parent groups, seek out community agencies**
  - ▶ **Gather information from other professionals; doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers, psychologists, and other parents...use the info to compile your own thoughts. No one person knows everything.**
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# Know the School System

- ▶ **Every school Board in Ontario has to follow the dictates of the Ministry of Education in Ontario.**
  - ▶ **There is a skeleton is in place.**
  - ▶ **Each Board has the leeway to interpret Regulation 181/98 differently**
  - ▶ **Do your research!**
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# Five Year Plan

- ▶ **Where do you want your son/daughter to be in five years?**
  - ▶ **Visualize it, strive for it**
  - ▶ **Be realistic.**
  - ▶ **Is it achievable?**
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# Student Advocacy

- ▶ Teach your son/daughter to self-advocate.
  - ▶ Self-advocacy is a powerful tool.
  - ▶ Most successful special students are those who know their disability and can articulate their needs to others.
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# Google Away

- ▶ **Community agencies**
  - ▶ **Summer camps**
  - ▶ **Recreational programs**
  - ▶ **Hospitals**
  - ▶ **Re-hab Centres (Bloorview)**
  - ▶ **Parent groups**
  - ▶ **Peer groups**
  - ▶ **Sibling groups**
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# The Big Picture

- ▶ **Hyper focussing can be negative**
  - ▶ **Responsibilities to others (spouse, other children)**
  - ▶ **Take time away from your son/daughter. Not effective if you are always in “care-giver” mode. so**
  - ▶ **Need time to reflect and recharge. It will make you more effective. Get help from your family, care givers, or respite care workers.**
  - ▶ **Work as a unit**
  - ▶ **Affects everyone**
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