



PARENT/GUARDIAN
GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

2025-2026

Niagara Children's Centre School
Authority



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the Niagara Children's Centre School! Staff and parents/guardians are partners in education and we encourage you to become as involved as possible in your child's education. We value ongoing communication between home and school and believe this partnership is a vital part of your child's success at our school and throughout their educational journey.

We trust the information gathered in this Handbook will help you get better acquainted with the special education services provided at the Niagara Children's Centre School (NCCSA).

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or need more information.

Catherine Hodson, Principal

Niagara Children's Centre School Authority
567 Glenridge Avenue, St. Catharines, ON L2T 4C2
T: 905-688-1890 Ext. 230 F: 905-688-1055
catherine.hodson@niagarachildrenscentre.com

School Hours	
Morning Classes Begin	9:10 am
Lunch	11:40 am - 12:20 pm
Fitness Breaks	2:00 pm -2:15 pm 2:15 pm - 2:30 pm
Dismissal	3:20 pm

Visit our Website at - Niagara Children's Centre School Authority

About the Niagara Children's Centre School Authority

As a centre of excellence, the Niagara Children's Centre School provides individualized instruction that is designed to meet your child's individualized learning and motivational needs. Our school supports students from 4 to 21 years of age with multi-learning and physical exceptionalities. Our specialist teachers, therapists and other professionals utilize a family centred care approach to building student success in early literacy and numeracy development, augmentative and alternative communication skills as well as engaging students to be lifelong learners through building self-esteem and self-advocacy skills.

Mission/Vision/Values

Mission Statement: Weaving education and therapy together to help children with special needs succeed at school, at home and within their community

Vision: A leader in the field of special education: preparing students, families and communities for success

Values: The children and families we serve are at the heart of Niagara Children's Centre School.

We show this through our:

- Care
- Respect
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Collaboration
- Innovation



Learning Knows No Bounds

What Special Services are provided by the Board?

The Niagara Children's Centre School admits students who can benefit from interdisciplinary intervention programs for students with complex needs and require a specific period (1-2 years) of specialized educational and therapeutic programming.

The academic programming, based on the Ontario curriculum, focuses on the acquisition of early literacy and numeracy skills. Strategies determined by physical, occupational and speech-language therapies are integrated into the child's day to support their participation in educational programming. Professional therapists, provided by the Niagara Children's Centre work in consultation with the classroom team of special education teachers and educational assistants, to develop individualized programming to meet the unique needs of each student at the School Authority.

The Admission Criteria

To be eligible to apply:

- Student must be between the age of 4 (by December 31, 2022) and 21.
- Student must reside in the Regional Municipality of Niagara.
- The student must have complex needs and meet the criteria for active intervention in two or more of the following therapy areas:

Therapy Area	Area of Need
Physiotherapy	Moderate to Severe impairment in gross motor development
Occupational Therapy	Moderate to Severe impairment in fine motor development and functional or daily living skills
Speech Language Pathology	Moderate to Severe impairment in receptive, expressive language and/or speech development

*children who require speech and language intervention as well as development of an alternative or augmentative communication system would be considered as having needs in two areas.

Our Program Process

- Identification of the child's strengths and specific needs
- Intervention to develop strategies that address the child's individual needs
- Accommodations and modifications to meet each child's development
- An individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student
- Support to the family in preparing for transitioning to a community school
- Support for community schools when students transition into their classes

What is a Special Education Service?

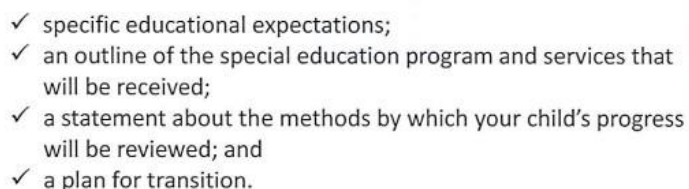
Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
- includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

What is an IEP?

An Individual Education Plan is a written plan of action. It is a working document which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil and the special education program and services established to meet the pupil's needs. An Individual Education Plan is developed for students who may require curriculum adaptations for their specific learning needs. It creates opportunities for parents/guardians, teachers, and others involved with the student to collaboratively identify individual learning needs and to develop specific teaching and learning strategies and/or curriculum adaptations which will address these needs.

The IEP must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

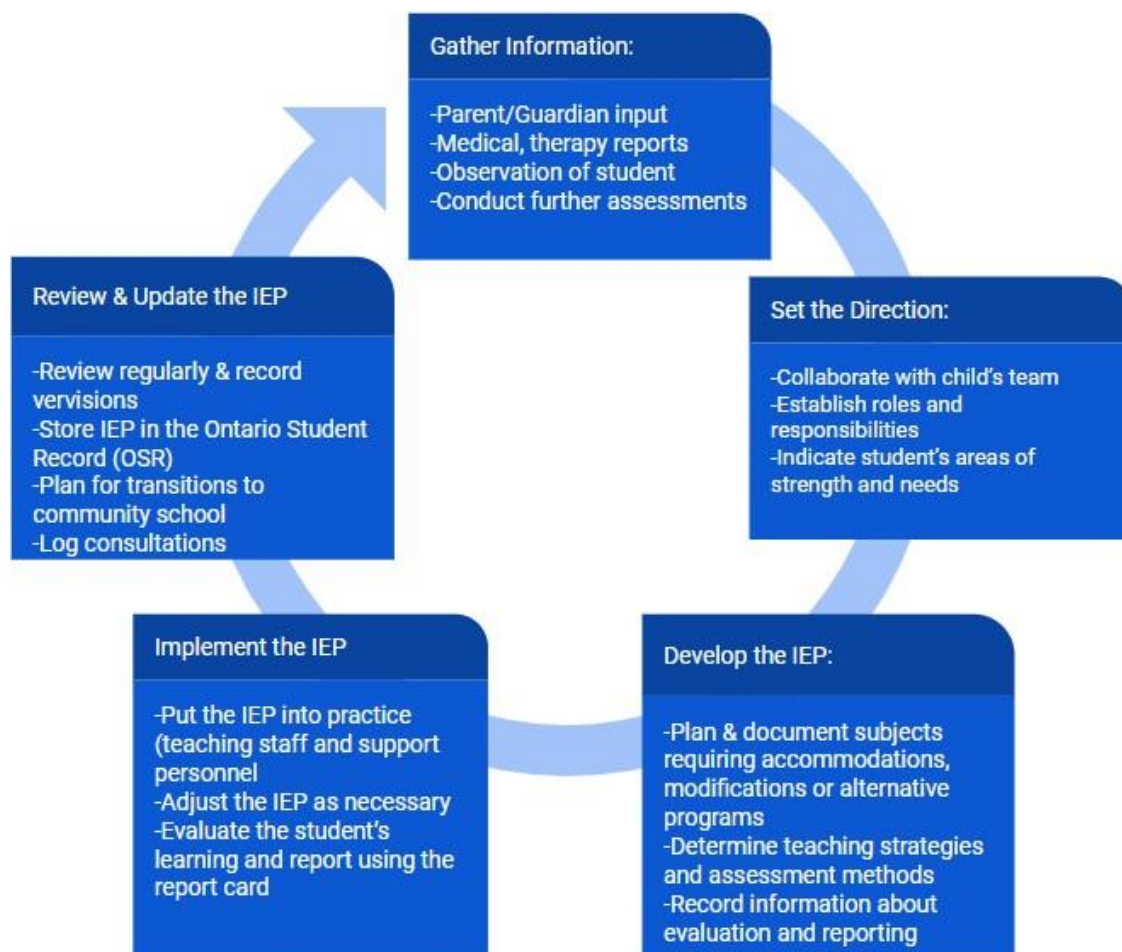
- 
- ✓ specific educational expectations;
 - ✓ an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
 - ✓ a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
 - ✓ a plan for transition.

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it. Parents/guardians are important partners and are encouraged to actively participate in the development of the individual education plan and to sign it once completed.

What happens once an Individual Education Plan is in place?

The Individual Education Plan will evolve as a student grows and matures. Within each term, a student's goals and needs are reviewed. Regular communication with the parents/guardians is essential to the success of the individual education plan

Phases of the IEP Process at NCCSA



What is an IPRC?

An Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) meet to determine whether a student is exceptional and what placement and program will best support the student. This committee of educators will meet with you to discuss the special education needs of your child. If your child is over 16 years old, they are invited to participate in the meeting. In collaboration with you, the team will make decisions on how best to meet the needs of your child. This meeting takes place annually to review the decision, but can be held more frequently when change and collaboration is needed. The committee has three required team members: a principal chairs the meeting and two other staff members take part. As the parent/student, you play an important role in helping the committee make good decisions about your child. Parents/guardians are encouraged to ask questions at the meeting and to provide the IPRC with any relevant information you consider important to the decisions of the IPRC.

IPRCs at the Niagara Children's Centre School

Students who attend the Niagara Children's Centre School meet the admission criteria and are on the caseload of the Niagara Children's Centre. Parents/Guardians must agree to the school placement as opposed to placement within a local district school board. Placement is short term (usually 1-2 years) and is goal specific for children who have moderate to severe needs in at least two therapeutic disciplines, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology and Augmentative & Alternative Communication.

The IPRC process is not usually utilized in this specialized setting. Receiving school boards follow their own IPRC processes as needed once the student is registered at their community school. This supports a streamlined process for parents/guardians and avoids duplication of the IPRC process. The IPRC process only occurs at NCCSA at the request of parents/guardians in accordance with Regulation 181/98.

The school authority provides only special education services to a specific group of identified students and does not provide for services of other exceptionalities.

The number of referrals to the school program is transient and varies from year to year depending on local demographics. No new students who have been admitted to the program have received an IPRC in the last 13 years. Our "Parents/Guardians Guide to Special Education" is available for all parents/guardians.

Parents/Guardians may request team meetings to discuss their child's progress at any time.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide an appropriate placement for your child and review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Who is Identified as an Exceptional Pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as "a pupil who's behavioral, communicational, intellectual, physical, and/or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program." Students are identified according to the categories and definition of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

Categories and Exceptionalities

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
Behaviour	
Behaviour	A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following: a) an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships; b) excessive fears or anxieties; c) a tendency to compulsive reaction; d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof
Communication	
Autism	A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

	<p>a) disturbances in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rate of educational development; – ability to relate to the environment; – mobility; – perception, speech, and language; <p>b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language</p>
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing	An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.
Language Impairment	<p>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:</p> <p>a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and</p> <p>b) include one or more of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – language delay; – dysfluency; – voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.
Speech Impairment	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.
Learning Disability	<p>One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are at least in the average range; - results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range) and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support; - results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in

	<p>one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; executive functions (e.g. self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making); - may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities; - is not the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.
Intellectual	
Giftedness	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
Mild Intellectual Disability	<p>A learning disorder characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service; b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
Developmental Disability	<p>A severe learning disorder characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development; b) an inability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
Physical	
Physical Disability	A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to

	require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.
Blind and Low Vision	A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely
Multiple	
Multiple Exceptionalities	A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

Community Partners and Organizations

Association for Bright Children - Ontario	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder - Ontario Network of Expertise
Autism Ontario	Ontario Health at Home
Bethesda	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)	Niagara Children's Centre
Child Parent Resource Institute (CPRI)	Niagara Support Services
Community Living Ontario	Niagara Training and Employment Agency (NTEC)
Contact Niagara	Pathstone Mental Health
Down Syndrome Niagara	Voice for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Ministry Provincial and Demonstration Schools

The Ministry of Education operates Provincial Schools and Provincial Demonstration Schools in the province of Ontario.

Provincial Demonstration Schools	Schools for the Deaf
Sagonaska School 350 Dundas Street West, Belleville ON K8P 1B2 Phone: (613) 967-2830 Fax: (905) 967-2482	Sir James Whitney School 350 Dundas Street West, Belleville ON K8P 1B2 Phone and TTY: (613) 967-2823 Fax: (613) 967-2857
Amethyst School 1090 Highbury Avenue, London ON N5Y 4V9 Phone: (519) 453-4408 Fax: (519) 453-2160	Robarts School 1090 Highbury Avenue, PO Box 7360, Station E, London ON N5Y 4V9 Phone and TTY: (519) 453-4400 Fax: (519) 453-7943
Trillium School 347 Ontario Street South, Milton ON L9T 3X9 Phone: (905) 878-8428 Fax: (905) 878-7540	Ernest C. Drury School 255 Ontario Street South, Milton ON L9T 2M5 Phone: (905) 878-2851 Fax: (905) 878-1354

School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind	Francophone School for the Deaf and Those with Learning Disabilities
W. Ross Macdonald School 350 Brant Avenue, Brantford ON N3T 3J9 Phone: (519) 759-0730 Fax: (519) 759-4741	Centre Jules-Léger 281 rue Lanark, Ottawa ON K1Z 6R8 Phone: (613) 761-9300 TTY: (613) 761-9302 and 761-9304 Fax: (613) 761-9301

They exist to:

- provide education for students who are deaf or blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.
- provide an alternative education option.
- serve as regional resource centres for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind.
- provide pre-school home visiting services for students who are deaf or deaf-blind.
- develop and provide learning materials and media for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind.
- provide school board teachers with resource services.
- play a valuable role in teacher training throughout the province.

APPENDIX A
INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

Student ID#:
Student OEN:
Date of Birth:



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587 Glenridge Ave
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905-688-3550

IEP Cover Page

REASON FOR DEVELOPING THE IEP

- ☐ Student identified as exceptional by IPRC ☐ Student not formally identified but requires special education program/services, including modified/alternative learning expectations and/or accommodations

STUDENT PROFILE

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Date of Birth: _____

School: _____

Student OEN: _____ Principal: _____

Current Grade/Special Class: _____ School Year: _____ Term: _____

Most Recent IPRC Date: _____

Statement of Decision: ☐ Exceptional: _____ ☐ Not Exceptional ☐ Non-Identified

Placement Decision (check one)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular class with indirect support | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular class with resource assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular class with withdrawal assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Special education class with partial integration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special education class full time | |

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Assessments

ASSESSMENT DATA

List relevant educational, medical/health (hearing, vision, physical, neurological), psychological, speech/language, occupational, physiotherapy, and behavioural assessments.

Information Source	Date	Summary of Results

Areas of Strength

Areas of Need

Health Support Services/Personal Support Required ☐ Yes (list below) ☐ No

- ☐ Administration of medication
- ☐ Feeding
- ☐ Lifting and Positioning
- ☐ Occupational Therapy
- ☐ Physiotherapy
- ☐ Suctioning
- ☐ Tube-feeding

- ☐ Assistance with transfers
- ☐ Injections
- ☐ Nursing
- ☐ Personal Support Worker
- ☐ Speech Language Pathology
- ☐ Toileting

Health Support Additional Notes:

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Courses and Accommodations

SUBJECTS, COURSES, OR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS TO WHICH THE IEP APPLIES

Identify each as Modified (MOD), Accommodated only (AC), or Alternative (ALT)

1. _____ ☐ MOD ☐ AC ☐ ALT

Elementary Program Exemptions or Secondary School Compulsory Course Substitutions

☐ Yes (provide educational rationale) ☐ No

Complete for secondary students only:

Student is currently working towards attainment of the:

☐ Ontario Secondary School Diploma ☐ Ontario Secondary School Certificate ☐ Certificate of Accomplishment

ACCOMMODATIONS

(Accommodations are assumed to be the same for all subjects to which they are applicable, unless otherwise indicated)

Instructional Accommodations	Environmental Accommodations	Assessment Accommodations

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Courses and Accommodations

Specialized Equipment Amount - Individualized Equipment

☐ Yes (list below) ☐ No

PROVINCIAL ASSESSMENTS (Accommodations and Exemptions)

Provincial assessments applicable to the student in the current school year:

Accommodations: ☐ Yes (list below) ☐ No

Exemptions: ☐ Yes (provide explanatory statement from relevant EQAO document) ☐ No

-
-
-

Deferred: ☐ Yes (provide explanatory statement from relevant EQAO document) ☐ No

-
-
-

Student ID#:
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Special Education Program

To be completed for each subject/course with modified expectations and/or each alternative program with alternative expectations

Teacher:	Subject/Course/Alternative Program:
Current Level of Achievement: Prerequisite course (if applicable) _____ Letter grade/Mark _____ Curriculum grade level _____	Baseline Level of Achievement for Alternative Program:

Annual Program Goal(s): A goal statement describing what the student can reasonably be expected to accomplish by the end of the school year in a particular subject, course, or alternative program.

Student ID#:
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Date of Birth:



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Transition

Transition Goals: Class to Class Transition

Actions Required	Action Detail	Person(s) Responsible	Timelines

Transition Goals: Class to Community School

Actions Required	Action Detail	Person(s) Responsible	Timelines

Transition Goals: Class to Community School Board

Actions Required	Action Detail	Person(s) Responsible	Timelines

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Transition

Student ID#:
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Date of Birth:



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Human Resources & IEP Team

HUMAN RESOURCES (teaching/non-teaching)

Service	Provider	Initiation Date	Frequency	Location(s)

EVALUATION

Reporting Dates:

Reporting Format

- ☐ Provincial Report Card (required unless student's program comprises alternative expectations only)
- ☐ Alternative Report
- ☐ JK/SK Report Addition
- ☐ Kindergarten Communication of Learning

IEP TEAM

IEP Developed by:

Staff Member	Position	Staff Member	Position
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Sources Consulted in the Development of the IEP

Date of Placement in Special Education Program (select the appropriate option)

- ☐ 1) First day of attendance in new special education program
- ☐ 2) First day of the new school year or semester in which the student is continuing in a placement
- ☐ 3) First day of the student's enrolment in a special education program that the student begins in mid-year or mid-semester as the result of a change of placement

Date of Placement:

Completion Date of IEP Development Phase
(within 30 school days following the Date of Placement):

Student ID#:
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Date of Birth:



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Consultation Log & Signatures

LOG OF PARENT/STUDENT CONSULTATION AND STAFF REVIEW/UPDATING

Date	Activity (indicate parent/student consultation or staff review)	Outcome	Staff Involved
------	--------------------------------------------------------------------	---------	----------------

The principal is legally required to ensure that the IEP is properly implemented and monitored.

This IEP has been developed according to the ministry's standards and appropriately addresses the student's strengths and needs. The learning expectations will be reviewed and the student's achievement evaluated at least once every reporting period.

Principal's Signature _____

Date _____

Involvement of Parent/Guardian and Student (if student is 16 or older)

I was consulted in the development of this IEP

☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Student

I declined the opportunity to be consulted in the development of this IEP

☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Student

I have received a copy of this IEP

☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Student

Parent/Guardian and Student Comments:

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Student Signature (if 16 or older) _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT TRANSPORTATION PLAN (ISTP)



Individual Student Transportation Plan

APPENDIX A

Rationale:

Transportation is an integral part of a student's school experience and should account for their personal abilities and needs. An Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP) is a key part of ensuring students have successful experiences in school.

Student & School Contact Info		Date Implemented:	
Student:		Grade:	
Home Address:		School & Address:	
Parent & Contact Info:		School Phone:	

Bus & Route Information (Route # _____)		<input type="checkbox"/> Modified Day:	Home/Corner Pick up time: _____	School Pick up time: _____	ETA Home/Corner Drop off time: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Big Bus - Corner Stop	<input type="checkbox"/> Big Bus - Home Stop	<input type="checkbox"/> Seatbelt Required*	<input type="checkbox"/> Support Harness Required*		
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Bus - Corner Stop	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Bus - Home Stop	*Note any use of specialized or restrictive seating for transportation must involve taking proper measurements for safety reasons by a licensed professional (OT/PT) and approved by a parent/guardian before being prescribed.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Climate controlled vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Stroller <input type="checkbox"/> High-back <input type="checkbox"/> Reclining <input type="checkbox"/> Manual <input type="checkbox"/> Motorized	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Considerations:			

Student Information					
<input type="checkbox"/> Completely Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Blind / Low Vision	<input type="checkbox"/> Deaf / Hard of Hearing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Autism Spectrum Disorder	<input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to sensory stimuli	<input type="checkbox"/> Shunt	<input type="checkbox"/> ELL	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____					

Student Safety

Does the student pose a safety risk while in transit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Explain:

Strategies to Support Transportation

<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Seating <input type="checkbox"/> Front of bus <input type="checkbox"/> Back of bus <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Section <input type="checkbox"/> Window Seat <input type="checkbox"/> Aisle Seat	<input type="checkbox"/> Sitting alone away from peers and staff (providing personal space)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sitting with a rider to help with regulation and staying seated	<input type="checkbox"/> Must be met by staff / parent / caregiver on drop off / pick up <u>at door to bus</u> (hand off)
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of chewelry	<input type="checkbox"/> Transition Tool / Item used while riding and seated	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Kit and/or Squeeze it Kit while riding	<input type="checkbox"/> Companion Animal
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal prompts to go to and remain seated in upright position	<input type="checkbox"/> Guide to seat (e.g., holding hand, side by side escort, gestures)	<input type="checkbox"/> Use of visuals / picture system to prompt expected behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Limiting verbal dialogue to avoid escalation
<input type="checkbox"/> Conversing with student (e.g., friendly greetings, singing a familiar song)	<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Walker / Cane / Braces for mobility <input type="checkbox"/> collapsible <input type="checkbox"/> non-collapsible	<input type="checkbox"/> Step Stool Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Auditory Equipment (e.g. listening device)

Other Strategies to use:

Personal information and personal health information on this form is collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2, as amended, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.M. 56, as amended and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*, 2004, c.3 Sched. A., as amended and will be used for the purpose of providing transportation for students with complex needs and any similar or related purpose(s). Questions about this collection, use and disclosure should be directed to the Niagara Children's Centre School Authority (NCCSA), 567 Glenridge Avenue, St. Catharines, ON L2T 4C2 905-688-3550.

AUTHORIZATION/PLAN REVIEW

INDIVIDUALS WITH WHOM THIS PLAN IS TO BE SHARED: NCCSA Teaching and Support Staff, Niagara Student Transportation Services

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____