



**SPECIAL EDUCATION Plan
2026-2027**

Niagara Children's Centre School Authority
567 Glenridge Ave, St Catharines, ON, L2T 4C2
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NCCSA Parent/Guardian Guide

Appendix A

Section 1 - Introduction

This "Special Education Report 2026-2027" replaces all previous Special Education Plans of Niagara Children's Centre School Authority (the Board). This report has been written to comply with the requirements set out in Regulation 306 under the Education Act policy document entitled, "*Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans, 2000*". One of the purposes of the Special Education Report is to inform the Ministry of Education and the public about special education programs and services that are provided by the Authority in accordance with legislation and ministry policy on special education. The Board's Special Education Report is designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and regulations made under the act, and any other relevant legislation.

This Special Education Report is reviewed annually and amended, as necessary, to ensure that Niagara Children's Centre School Authority continues to provide the special education programs and services to meet the current needs of the exceptional students of Niagara Children's Centre School Authority.

Special Education Programs and Services

Section 2 - The Board's General Model for Special Education

The Mission and Vision of Niagara Children's Centre School Authority are the foundation upon which the special education programs at Niagara Children's Centre School have been built.

Mission: Weaving education and therapy together to create a unique and individualized educational experience, empowering our students to reach their full potential.

Vision: At Niagara Children's Centre School Authority, we envision an innovative and collaborative educational community that supports our students to learn and grow together to reach their full potential.

Niagara Children's Centre School Authority provides:

- 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

The programs at Niagara Children's Centre School are full day, interdisciplinary intervention programs for students with complex needs who 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, working in consultation with the classroom team of special education teachers and educational assistants, provide therapy to each eligible student at the School Authority.

The Application Process

To be eligible to apply:

- Student must be between the ages of 4 (by December 31, 2026) 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/Augmentative and Alternative Communication	Moderate to Severe impairment in receptive, expressive language and/or speech development. Exhibits face-to-face communication needs and/or communication needs

Applications are usually accepted from late January through mid-March each year. The Selection Committee views all applications and makes placement decisions. The committee is comprised of the Niagara Children's Centre School Principal and Special Education Consultant, and the Manager of Clinical Services for Niagara Children's Centre. All parents/guardians are informed of placement decisions in April and when a parent/guardian accepts the placement into the School Authority, the parent/guardian will receive **A Parent/Guardian's Guide To Special Education**.

The 1-2 year program focuses on identification, intervention and transition into community school. The School operates under Section 68 of the Education Act of the Province of Ontario and is funded by the Ministry of Education. The education expectations are based on each student's individual needs and are connected to the Kindergarten Program and Ontario Curriculum Documents developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Teachers, families, educational assistants, a Designated Early Childhood Educator and therapists work as Education teams to combine education and therapy to meet the unique needs of the children.

Section 3 – The Identification, Placement & Review Committee (IPRC) Process

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act provides information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and sets out the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement, or appealing such decisions when the parent/guardian does not agree with the IPRC.

The role of the IPRC is to:

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

NOTE: 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 home school. This supports a streamlined process for parents/guardians and avoids duplication of the IPRC process. The IPRC process only occurs at the school at the request of the parent/guardian, in accordance with Regulation 181/98.

Section 4 – Special Education Placements Provided by the Board

Niagara Children's Centre School Authority is a specialized school that provides educational programming and classroom-based therapy for eligible students aged 4 to 21 years of age. The School operates six classrooms and students are placed in classrooms with similar aged peers.

All classes have students who present with a wide range of needs, including, but not limited to complex medical needs, expressive and/or receptive language delays, physical challenges, cognitive delays, fine motor challenges, sensory needs and augmentative and alternative communication needs.

Each class is staffed with a qualified teacher (OCT) as well as two qualified Educational Assistants. The services of Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and, when needed, a Social Worker, round out the education team as needed. These services are provided solely by the Niagara Children's Centre.

Section 5 – Individual Education Plan (IEPs)

Each student in the Niagara Children's Centre School will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) written in collaboration with the child's multidisciplinary team. The team (parent/guardian, teacher, principal, special educational consultant, therapists) provide input to develop the IEP. The classroom teacher then prepares the IEP, describing specific learning expectations that may be accommodated, modified from, or alternative to the Kindergarten Program or the Ontario curriculum.

The IEP is a flexible working document that is updated as needed throughout the school year to reflect the child's progress. IEPs are revised and reported upon every reporting period.

Disputes concerning IEPs are resolved at the school level through discussion and collaboration between the parents/guardians, the principal, the teacher, and members of the child's team as appropriate.

Student ID#: _____
 Student OEN: _____
 Date of Birth: _____



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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)

- Regular class with indirect support Regular class with resource assistance
 Regular class with withdrawal assistance Special education class with partial integration
 Special education class full time

Student ID#: _____
 Student OEN: _____
 Date of Birth: _____



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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

Area of Strength

Area of Need

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration of medication | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with transfers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeding | <input type="checkbox"/> Injections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifting and Positioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Support Worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech Language Pathology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suctioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Toileting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tube-feeding | |

Health Support Additional Notes:

Student ID#: _____
 Student OEN: _____
 Date of Birth: _____



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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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Student OEN: _____
Date of Birth: _____



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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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 Date of Birth: _____



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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#:
Student OEN:
Date of Birth:



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Transition

Student ID#: _____
 Student OEN: _____
 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

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#:
 Student OEN:
 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 _____

Section 6 – Special Education Staff

Information on the types and number of staff who provide special education programs and services at Niagara Children's Centre School Authority is found in the chart below. The chart outlines the types of Special Education and Support staff employed by the board.

	Special Education Staff	FTEs	Staff Qualifications
1	Teachers of exceptional students		
1.1	Teachers for self-contained classes	8.0	OTC; AQ: Special Education Part 1-3
2	Other special education teachers		
2.1	Consultants	1.0	OTC; AQ: Special Education Part 1-3
3	Educational assistants in special education		
3.1	Educational assistants	13.0	E.A. Diploma
4	Designated Early Childhood Educator		
4.1	Designated Early Childhood Educator	1.0	DECE Diploma
5	Additional support staff		
	Administrative Assistant	1.0	Experience in office administration; relevant post-secondary education
	Business Administrator/HR	1.0	Qualifications and experience in finance and human resources; relevant post-secondary education
	Personal Support Worker	3.0	Relative post-secondary education and experience
	Caretaker	0.5	Grade 12 diploma and relevant experience

Section 7 – Specialized Equipment

Each classroom has adaptive equipment such as chairs, tables, desks, iPads, adapted computer hardware, software, communication devices, and personal care equipment, depending on student need. The classes for the students' physical education program share equipment and adapted tools for the development of gross motor skills. Each classroom is equipped with a sound-field system.

In addition, specialized equipment such as standers, walkers, benches, adapted chairs, and other therapy equipment is available on a trial basis and is used with children in the classroom setting for a period to determine appropriateness. The goal is to determine what specialized equipment is essential to allow the child to participate functionally in a school setting and ensure the equipment is in place prior to the child's transition to a community school.

The Board receives funding for the purchase of specialized equipment through the Special Equipment Allocation (SEA), administered by the Ministry of Education. This equipment provides students with accommodations to access the Ontario curriculum and/or a board-determined alternative program and/or to attend school. Any equipment that is purchased with SEA funding travels with the child when he/she transitions to another publicly-funded school in Ontario

Section 8 - Transportation

Transportation is provided for all students who attend Niagara Children's Centre School. Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) is a consortium that services the Niagara Children's Centre School, the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN), and the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB). It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the school is aware of any health condition that may require immediate medical attention. The school provides this information for inclusion on the bus route copy so that the bus driver can respond accordingly in urgent situations. 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.

Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) make all determinations regarding student eligibility for nursing on the bus.

NSTS provides information to families during the summer, prior to the start of school in order to build comfort and confidence with the students and their families and to ensure familiarity of the drivers with those using this service.



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"/> Small Bus - Corner Stop <input type="checkbox"/> Small Bus - Home Stop	<input type="checkbox"/> Seatbelt Required* <input type="checkbox"/> Support Harness Required*	*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 (hand off)</u>
<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: _____

Section 9 – Transition Planning

Central to our design is the successful transition to and from community school placements with replicable strategies for participation in learning as well as the transfer of knowledge from our teachers and therapists to teachers in the broader educational community. The Niagara Children's Centre School staff work closely with boards of education to support the smooth transition of students.

Consistent, clear communication is built into practice to ensure the strengths and needs of students leaving our school are shared, so that appropriate support and programming can be put in place. Transition meetings for our students, include families, representation from school board personnel, our Niagara Children's Centre School team and Special Education Consultant, and Niagara Children's Centre therapy teams, as appropriate. Transition planning is integral to the process. Community school placement and inclusion are essential considerations for students returning to their home school boards of education.

The staff at Niagara Children's Centre School recognize that learning how to manage transitions is an essential life skill that will be used by our students well beyond the school years. Individualized transition plans, as part of the IEP, are created for all students to reflect their strengths and needs and to document the specific actions, responsibilities and timelines to be implemented. Each transition is carefully planned in consultation with families and the staff of the receiving school. Every student leaving our school does so with a completed Transition Portfolio. This portfolio includes all the information a receiving school needs to know in order to get to know the student as a learner, and to provide appropriate programming and support. Students, families and school staff contribute to the development of the portfolio. Samples of student work, learning stories, including photos and videos of the learning process, and other artifacts may be included. Family voice is also an integral piece of the portfolio, with families providing input around developing goals and future planning. The Niagara Children's Centre School team, including teachers and therapists, will include information related to the strategies, equipment and supports that make each individual student successful in the school environment.

Portfolios will be shared with the receiving school/board at a transition meeting when it is determined that the student will be returning to their community school.

Transition Timelines: What to Expect

SEPTEMBER	Transition to School
OCTOBER	Individual Education Plans developed, including Individual Behaviour Support Plans and Transition Plans
NOVEMBER	IEPs home to families
DECEMBER	Parent/guardian session on Transition planning

JANUARY	Transition discussions begin with District School Board partners
FEBRUARY	Placement reviews with the school team Parent/guardian meetings to discuss progress
MARCH	Parent/guardian meetings to discuss placement and transition
APRIL	School Board observations
MAY	Transition meetings to share portfolio with District School Board/receiving school
JUNE	School transition visits

Provincial Information

Section 10 – Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministry of Education defines the roles and responsibilities for all involved in special education in Ontario. Listed are the roles and responsibilities for the Ministry of Education, the district school boards or school authorities, the school principal, the teachers of the board (special education teachers), Parent/Guardian and students.

The Ministry of Education:

- defines, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services, and prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality;
- ensures that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional students;
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. (The model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants);
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education;
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement;
- requires school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry;
- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The District School Board or School Authority:

- establishes school board policies and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional students of the board;
- obtains the appropriate funding and reports on the expenditures for special education;
- develops and maintains a special education plan that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional students of the board;
- reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education;
- provides reports to the ministry as required and as requested;
- prepares a parent/guardian guide to provide Parent/Guardian with information about special education programs, services and procedures;
- establishes one or more Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC) to identify exceptional students and determine appropriate placements for them;
- provides professional development to staff on special education.

The School Principal:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, and through board policies;
- communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff;
- ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes;
- communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents/guardians;
- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional students, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies;
- consults with Parent/Guardian and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional students;
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements;
- ensures that parents/guardians are consulted in the development of their child's IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP;
- ensures the delivery of the program as set out in the IEP;
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested if necessary and that parental consent is obtained.

The Special Education Teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education;
- maintains up-to-date knowledge of special education practices;
- communicates the student's progress to Parent/Guardian;
- holds qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education;
- plans and implements instructional programs, IEPs and educational assessments; collaborates with teachers, Parent/Guardian and support personnel to determine appropriate accommodations for student learning and necessary modifications made to programs as well as communicating assessment results;
- monitors, with reference to the IEP, identified individual students regarding program, placement and support structures;
- facilitates student transition to and from new programs and placements;
- provides full educational classroom experience for a specific number of students who have been identified as exceptional in one or more of several areas
- provides input to school staff, parents/guardians, support staff and representatives of community agencies, as appropriate, regarding the needs of students in order to maximize the effectiveness of programs;
- designs and implements IEPs;
- co-ordinates IPRC meetings or case conferences as required;
- supports the transition of students through the system and into the community;
- supervises and works with educational assistants to provide program support for students.

The Parent/Guardian:

- becomes familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures that affect the child;
- participates in IPRCs, parent/guardian-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities;
- participates in the development of the IEP;
- becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student;
- works with the school principal and teachers to solve problems;
- is responsible for the student's attendance at school.

The Student:

- complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- complies with board policies and procedures.

Section 11 – Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

The following are the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education:

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:

- a) disturbances in:
 - rate of educational development
 - ability to relate to the environment
 - mobility
 - perception, speech, and language
- b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language

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:

A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in the 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;
- b) include one or more of the following:
 - 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:

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
- 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

b) may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:

- a perceptual handicap
- a brain injury
- minimal brain dysfunction
- dyslexia
- developmental aphasia

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:

A learning disorder characterized by:

- 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:

A severe learning disorder characterized by:

- a) an inability to profit from a Special Education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development
- b) an ability 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 developmental 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 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.

Section 12 – Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario

Children who attend the Niagara Children's Centre School Authority are able to apply to provincial and demonstration schools, and applications are initiated where warranted. The following is a list of schools and services:

Provincial Schools and Provincial Demonstration Schools:

- are operated by the Ministry of Education;
- 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 preschool 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.

Some students attending the Niagara Children's Centre School receive consultation services from resource staff at the W. Ross MacDonald School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind, and from the Robarts School for the Deaf. This serves to enhance classroom programming.

Transportation to provincial schools is provided by local district school boards. Should a student from the Niagara Children's Centre School be accepted into a provincial school, the student would be transitioned and registered at a local district school board prior to being enrolled in the provincial school.

Provincial Schools Contact Information

More information on these schools is also available on the **Provincial Schools Branch page** of the ministry website at: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/special-education-ontario-policy-and-resource-guide-kindergarten-grade-12/provincial>

Ministry of Education
 Provincial School Branch
 255 Ontario Street South
 5 Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5
 Tel: (905) 878-2851
 Fax: (905) 878-5405

Provincial School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind (W. Ross Macdonald):

W. Ross Macdonald School is located in Brantford and provides education for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind.

- Provides education for blind, visually impaired and deaf/blind students.
- Curriculum consistent with Ontario Curriculum.
- Full range of courses (elementary and secondary).
- Comprehensive life skills programs.
- Students transported weekly.
- Pre-school visiting program.

Resource Support

- Provides consultation and special learning materials (i.e., braille, large print).
- **W. Ross Macdonald School** 305 Brant Avenue, Brantford, Ontario N3T 3J9, Tel: (519) 759-0730

Provincial Schools for the Deaf:

The following Provincial Schools offer services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students;

- **Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf** (Belleville - serves Eastern Ontario) 350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2, Phone: (613) 967-2823
- **Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf** (Milton - serves Central and Northern Ontario) 255 Ontario Street South, Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5, Phone: (905) 878-2851
- **Robarts School for the Deaf** (London - serves Western Ontario) 1090 Highbury Avenue, London, Ontario N5Y 4V9, Phone: (519) 453-4400

- **Centres Jules-Leger** (Ottawa - serves Francophone students) 281 Lanark Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8, Phone: (613) 761-9300

Schools for the deaf:

- provide rich and supportive bilingual/bicultural educational environments which facilitate students' language acquisition, learning, and social development through American Sign Language (ASL) and English;
- operate primarily as day schools;
- provide residential facilities five days per week for those students who do not live within reasonable commuting distance from the school.

Teachers may obtain additional information the school's Resource Services Department.

Demonstration Schools:

The Ministry of Education and Training provides the services of three English language provincial demonstration schools for Ontario children with severe learning disabilities. Application for admission to a Provincial Demonstration School is made on behalf of students by the school board, with parental/guardian consent. The Provincial Committee on Learning Disabilities (PCLD) determines whether a student is eligible for admission. Although the primary responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs for students with learning disabilities remains with school boards, the Ministry recognizes that some students require a residential school setting for a period of time.

The Demonstration Schools were established to:

- provide special residential education programs for students between the ages of 5 and 21 years;
- enhance the development of each student's academic and social skills;
- develop the abilities of the students enrolled to a level that will enable them to return to programs operated by a local school board within two years.

Teachers may obtain additional information from the Resource Services Departments of the Provincial Schools listed below.

- **Amethyst Demonstration School** 1090 Highbury Avenue, London, ON, Phone: (519) 453-4400
- **Trillium Demonstration School** 347 Ontario St South, Milton, ON L9T 3X9, Phone: (905) 878-2851
- **Sagonaska Demonstration School** 350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON, Phone: (613) 967-2830

Other Related Information for Community

Section 13 – Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

As indicated in the ministry of Education Policy Program Memorandum 11, early identification is part of a continuous assessment process which should be initiated when a child is first enrolled in school."

The students admitted to the Niagara Children's Centre School Authority are students who are identified for school placement by; Niagara Children's Centre therapists, families, district school board personnel and/or other community professionals as children requiring moderate to severe therapy support. By gathering all of the assessment information from the aforementioned professionals and working closely with the preschool sector in the Niagara Region, early identification and intervention is made possible. The Niagara Children's Centre School Authority's Special Education Consultant supports the collection of this data, which includes collecting existing reports as well as discussions with parents/guardians and other referral sources.

All the reports and recommendations gathered serve as a baseline for initial programming in our School. As part of the continuous assessment and program planning process, the child's inter-disciplinary team regularly discusses the child's learning strengths and needs, the learning environment, intervention strategies and expectations. The child's program is accommodated and/or modified accordingly. Assessment is the key to student growth and is a continuous, fluid process that happens until the student is recommended to return to their community school placement.

Families play an integral role in the assessment and program planning process. The family contributes important information about their child, which assists the team in program planning. All students will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed before they leave our school. The family participates in the creation and revision of the child's IEP throughout the school year.

Section 14 – Educational and Other Assessments

All Niagara Children's Centre School teachers have special education qualifications. In addition, all teachers are provided with additional in-service on assessment by the Special Educational Consultant. Assessment tools/methods such as curriculum based assessments, learning stories, H.E.L.P., guided observation, checklists, anecdotal records, work sampling, portfolios, conferencing/interviewing, and teacher observations of student learning are used to monitor student growth. All assessment data is considered in conjunction with reports from therapists and parents/guardians in order to get a complete profile of the learner, develop an Individualized Education Plan and report progress to parents/guardians throughout the year.

The physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech language pathology staff working with students are all employees of the Niagara Children's Centre and are members of their respective colleges under the Regulated Health Professions

Act, 1993. They all hold graduate or post-graduate degrees, in their respective fields. Social workers are members of their respective colleges.

The Augmentative and Alternative Communication Clinic is an expanded clinic responsible to the Assistive Devices Branch of the Ministry of Health, as well as the Centralized Equipment Pool.

When deemed appropriate and with parental/guardian consent, referrals for other assessments such as psychoeducational assessments, may be requested. With respect to therapy reassessments, therapists within each child's multidisciplinary team determine when updated assessments/care plans are warranted.

Parents/guardians are important members of the team, and informed parental/guardian consent is always obtained, outlining the types of assessment proposed and how the information will be gathered, communicated, transmitted and stored. Copies of assessment reports are shared with parents/guardians and are filed in the child's Ontario Student Record (OSR); the privacy of that information is protected by the OSR guidelines. In addition, assessment reports are filed in the child's main file at the Niagara Children's Centre. The exchange of information with any other agency is at the request of the parents/guardians, and a signed *Consent for Release of Confidential Information* is obtained.

Section 15 – Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies

Transition into Niagara Children's Centre School Authority

Students at Niagara Children's Centre School are clients of the Niagara Children's Centre, or are usually involved with School Based Rehabilitation Services, which are provided by the Niagara Children's Centre in our region. The referring multi-disciplinary team or School Based therapists provide the school with the child's most recent assessment reports.

A transition to school protocol has been created in partnership with local school boards and preschool services in the Niagara Region.

Timeline for New Applicants to Niagara Children's Centre School

FEBRUARY to MARCH	Parents/Guardians begin to submit applications to Niagara Children's Centre School Authority. Complete the Application Package with support from your therapy team, school team and/or community supports. Packages can be obtained through the Niagara Children's Centre School website, from your child's therapy team or home school.
MARCH	Applications are due.
	Application reviewed by education selection team. Offer of Placement emailed to family. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptance for Placement returned to Niagara Children's Centre School.

APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification to DSBN/NCDSB of students coming to Niagara Children's Centre School. <p>The Admissions Committee will determine which candidates are appropriate for our available program spaces and communicate admissions decisions via email.</p>
MAY	Transition plans and meetings will occur based on individual student needs.
MAY/JUNE	Transition meetings and visits for incoming students.
First week of SEPTEMBER	Entry meetings begin with parents/guardians, teachers, educational assistants and school therapists
SEPTEMBER	Special Education Consultant available for consultation as full transitioning occurs for 2026-2027 students

Transition from Niagara Children's Centre School to Community Schools

Niagara Children's Centre School is committed to the successful transitions of students to community school environments. The transfer of knowledge takes place from Niagara Children's Centre Special Education Consultant, teachers and therapists to teachers in the broader educational community.

Timeline for Niagara Children's Centre School Students Transitioning to Community Schools

OCTOBER	IEPs home to families
DECEMBER to JANUARY	Parent/guardian session on Transition planning
JANUARY	Transition discussions begin with District School Board partners
FEBRUARY	Placement reviews happen with the Niagara Children's Centre School team Parent/guardian meetings scheduled to discuss student progress
MARCH	Parent/guardian meetings scheduled to discuss placement and transition for the following school year

APRIL	District School Board staff are invited to observe and learn about transitioning students
MAY	Transition meetings to share portfolio with District School Board/receiving school Transition meeting participants may include Parents/guardians, Niagara Children's Centre School teachers, Niagara Children's Centre therapists, NCDSB/DSBN personnel, and Ontario Health at Home
JUNE	School transition visits for students returning to home school take place SEA Equipment transferred to home schools
SEPTEMBER	Niagara Children's Centre School staff available to consult with home schools Niagara Children's Centre Special Education Consultant can visit home schools to assist with transition as necessary SEA Equipment transferred to home schools OSR's requested and sent to home schools

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Niagara Children's Centre School is committed to a multidisciplinary, family-centred approach that involves specialist teachers, therapists and other professionals creating opportunities for student success in literacy and mathematics development, augmentative and alternative communication, self-regulation, independence and using technology for learning. Niagara Children's Centre School ensures parents/guardians are an integral member of the team in planning and decision making.

Collaboration takes place with the community schools to assist in the planning for students being transferred from Niagara Children's Centre School. The principal is responsible for the coordination of the transition process.

Transition to the home school usually happens for September of the new school year. Once this decision is made, the community school staff are invited to observe the student in their Niagara Children's Centre School classroom and a transition meeting is held to facilitate a smooth transition to the child's receiving school. Parents/guardians, Niagara Children's Centre School team members and receiving school personnel are present to share information, including the student's portfolio, current IEP, and therapists' school-based recommendations. The Care Coordinator of Ontario Health at Home is invited to attend if the team is recommending School Health Support Services for the child in the receiving school.

The purpose of the transition meeting is:

- to share the educational programming and strategies for the student;
- to share therapists' recommendations for the student;
- to give parents/guardians an opportunity to share information and ask questions about the school schedule and program;
- to support parents/guardians in the child's transition to the community school; and to identify any future services necessary.

It is with the cooperation of many agencies within the Niagara Region and the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Family and Community Services that Niagara Children's Centre School Authority is able to help children cultivate their potential as they prepare for school success.

Section 16 – Specialized Health Support Services in the School Setting

Eligibility for admission to Niagara Children's Centre School is based on the need for specialized health services. The Centre provides a broad range of services to the students attending the Niagara Children's Centre School. Students are entitled to receive any or all of these services, as deemed appropriate by therapists.

Therapy services available to Niagara Children's Centre School students through the Centre include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and augmentative and alternative communication therapy. Service options are determined by the therapists based on student need and availability of resources. Therapists determine the most appropriate type and frequency of therapy intervention (e.g., direct therapy versus consultative services) and are responsible for communicating any changes in therapy services to families directly. Some students who attend Niagara Children's Centre School may access the Centre Seating Clinic. Social work support may be provided by the Niagara Children's Centre.

When nursing support services are required, a referral is made to the Home and Community Care Support Services by the principal. Ontario Health at Home reviews and revises the requisite amount of nursing services required for each Niagara Children's Centre School student annually. The type of nursing support provided (e.g., personal support worker, RN, RPN) as well as level of nursing support (e.g., shared versus dedicated) varies depending on individual student needs.

Eligibility criteria for nursing and therapy services are determined by the providing agency (Ontario Health at Home for nursing; the Centre for therapy). In the event of a dispute regarding a specific child's level of any specialized health service in the school setting, the principal would request a meeting of relevant parties to discuss the issue of concern.

Depending on the needs of the child and the resources available, different approaches will be used at different times throughout the school year. For example, a therapist may begin with a direct service approach to identify strategies and then change to a consultation approach to share these strategies with teachers and educational assistants. The child's therapists and school team work with the family to determine the most appropriate intervention plan.

Lifting and positioning, assistance with mobility, and toileting care are performed by the teachers, educational assistants and personal support workers employed by the Niagara Children's Centre School Authority, with consultation from the physiotherapist and/or occupational therapists employed by the Niagara Children's Centre.

Students transitioning full time from Niagara Children's Centre School who require nursing support, nutrition, catheterization, suctioning or feeding, will have a referral made for School Health Support Services through Ontario Health at Home. The Principal, with the consent of the parent/guardian, applies for these services for children at Niagara Children's Centre School. Upon referral for specialized health and support services, the case manager of Ontario Health at Home, works closely with the family and other health professionals to coordinate the health services required by the child. Niagara Children's Centre School invites the case coordinators of Ontario Health at Home to be present at conferences with parents/guardians to ensure parents/guardians are well informed of the involvement of Ontario Health at Home and their role in providing School Health Support Services

Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of service provider	Eligibility criteria:	Service determined by:	Criteria for ending service:
Nursing	Ontario Health at Home	As determined by the organization	Case Manager of HCCSS	HCCS case manager
Occupational therapy	NCC	OT Assessment Doctor referral	Therapist, Manager of Clinical Services	Therapist
Physiotherapy	NCC	PT Assessment Doctor referral	Therapist, Manager of Clinical Services	Therapist
Nutrition	Local Ontario Health at Home Dietitian Physician NCC OT/PT	Physician Assessment	Referral Process by physician	Referral Process by Physician
Speech and language therapy	NCC	SLP Assessment	Therapist, Manager of Clinical Services	Therapist

Administration of prescribed medications	NCCSA Support Staff and/or Ontario Health at Home (nurse)	Written request of Physician	Principal/ Ontario Health at Home case manager	Change of medication by physician
Catheterization	Ontario Health at Home	Referral for Service by physician	Case Manager Ontario Health at Home	Physicians' orders
Suctioning	Ontario Health at Home	Referral for Service by physician	Case Manager Ontario Health at Home	Physicians' orders
Lifting and positioning	NCCSA Support Staff directed by Therapist	PT/OT Assessment	Therapist	Therapist
Assistance with mobility	NCCSA Support Staff directed by Therapist	PT/OT Assessment	Therapist	Therapist
Feeding	NCCSA Support Staff directed by Therapist	1. OT/CT Assessment Feeding Clinic Assessment	Therapist/ Ontario Health at Home case manager	Therapist/ Ontario Health at Home Case Manager
Toileting	NCCSA Support Staff directed by Therapist	2. Physical Disabilities	Therapist	Therapist
Other: Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC)	NCC AAC Team	OT Assessment, AAC Assessment	Therapist	Therapist

Section 17 – Staff Development

Niagara Children's Centre School Authority is committed to on-going professional development for all education staff in order to provide "best practices" in the delivery of its special education services with a specific focus on students with complex communication, educational and therapy needs. The Board allocates funds in its annual budget for conferences, workshops, short courses and in-service programs.

Every year, in consultation with the Principal, each teacher is required to prepare an Annual Learning Plan (ALP) which includes the teacher's professional growth objectives, proposed action plan, and timelines for achieving those objectives.

Educational Assistants are also asked to identify their professional development needs annually.

Teachers receive ongoing training regarding Ministry of Education legislation and policy related to special education and general education; training is provided at monthly staff meetings and through the distribution of written materials. Teachers may be assigned to attend specific Ministry of Education training sessions, after which information from these sessions is shared with their colleagues at Niagara Children's Centre School. New teachers work closely with the Special Education Consultant to learn and implement assessment methods appropriate to their students.

Section 18 – Accessibility of the School Building

The current Niagara Children's Centre was updated in 1996. The building offers an accessible design for adults and children with disabilities. Niagara Children's Centre School is housed in this completely accessible facility. There are fire alarms for the hearing impaired; there is a single-level floor plan in the school and the office spaces upstairs can be accessed by an elevator; there is universal accessibility throughout the building. There is a therapeutic pool, and accessible paths in the playground.

The Niagara Children's Centre Accessibility Plan is available on the Niagara Children's Centre website.

Section 19 – The Board's Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The goal of the Niagara Children's Centre Special Education School Advisory Council is to provide advice and input to enhance and improve services to children at the School. The council includes parents/guardians, the Principal of Niagara Children's Centre School, and staff representatives from the School. Membership on the council and attendance at the meetings are open to families who have children who are currently clients of Niagara Children's Centre School. The council meets four times during the school year. Dates of council meetings are posted on the Niagara Children's Centre School website. The Special Education Plan will be shared with the Advisory Council and/or the Chair/Vice Chair for feedback before it is approved.

Section 20 – Submission and Availability of the Board's Special Education Report

A copy of the Niagara Children's Centre School's current comprehensive special education report is available in the school office and may be reviewed by the public on request. The report is also available on the Niagara Children's Centre School website at:

<https://www.niagarachildrenscentre.com/school-authority>

APPENDIX A

PARENT/GUARDIAN GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION



PARENT/GUARDIAN
GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

2026-2027

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.

Amber Overholt-Butler, 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
amber.overholt-butler@niagarachildrencentre.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

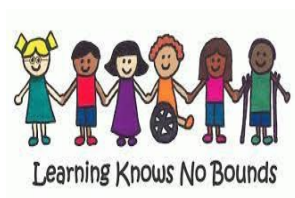
Mission Statement: Weaving education and therapy together to create a unique and individualized educational experience, empowering our students to reach their full potential.

Vision: At Niagara Children's Centre School Authority, we envision an innovative and collaborative educational community that supports our students to learn and grow together to reach their full potential.

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

We show this through our:

- Belonging
- Care
- Respect
- Transparency
- Trust
- Integrity



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, 2026) 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/Augmentative and Alternative Communication	Moderate to Severe impairment in receptive, expressive language and/or speech development Exhibits face-to-face communication needs and/or communication needs

*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 by the time they leave our school
- 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 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:

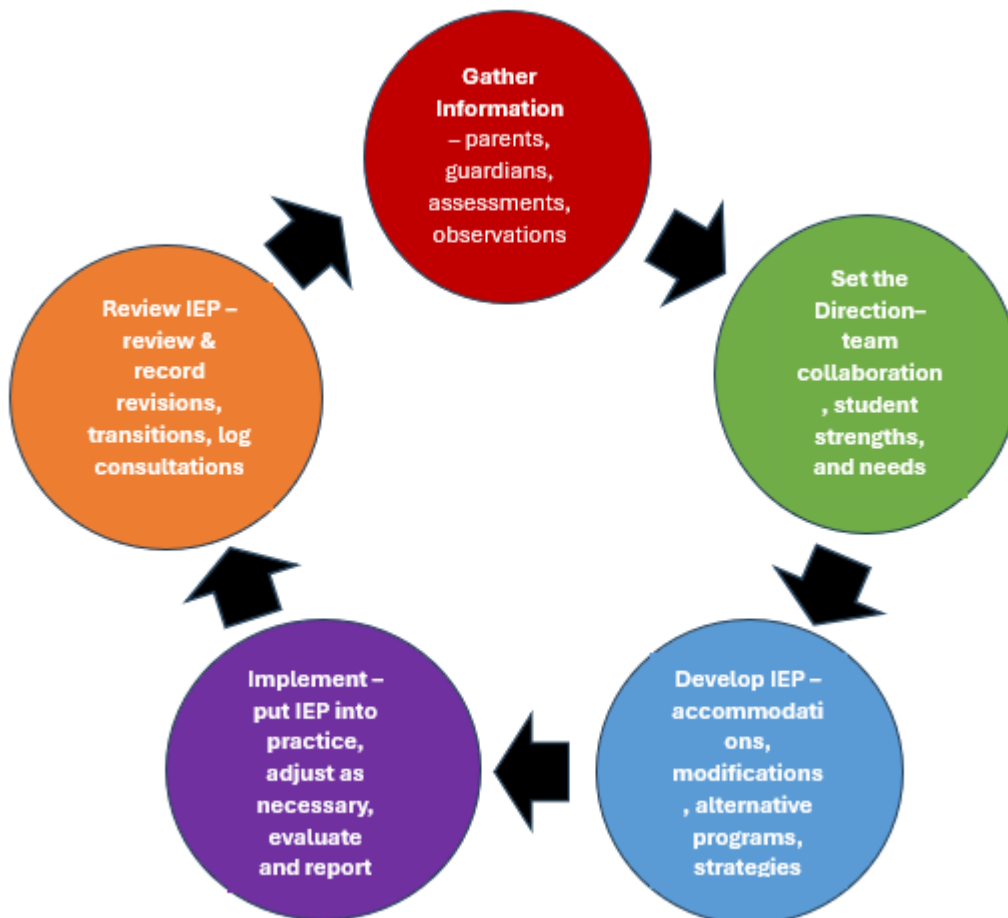
- ✓ specific educational expectations;
- ✓ an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- ✓ a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- ✓ a plan for transition.

The IEP will be completed within 30 school days for returning students, 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 Individual Education Plan



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 parents/guardians to discuss the special education needs of their child. If the child is over 16 years old, they are invited to participate in the meeting. In collaboration with parents/guardians, the team will make decisions on how best to meet the needs of the child. This meeting takes place annually to review the decision, but can be held more frequently when change and collaboration are needed. The committee has three required team members: a principal chairs the meeting, and two other staff members take part. The parent/guardian/student plays an important role in helping the committee make good decisions. Parents/guardians are encouraged to ask questions at the meeting and to provide the IPRC with any relevant information they 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 applications to the school program varies from year to year, depending on local demographics, number of available spots and complexity of student needs. 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 behavior 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 ability 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.