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Special Education Program Guide

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION SELF-CONTAINED CLASS PROGRAM

Self-Contained Class Placements

Grades 1 to 8
(maximum of 10 students)

“All student’s learn best when instruction, resources and the learning environment are well suited to their particular strengths, interests, need and stages of readiness.”

- Learning For All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction, Kindergarten to Grade 12

Purpose of the Placement

The purpose of this class is to:

- Support the strengths and needs of students diagnosed with a Developmental Disability
- Modify the environment and provide methods of instruction that are compatible with the student's learning profile thereby enabling the student to experience academic, social/emotional and communication growth
- Provide integration opportunities for students based on IEP goals within the wider school community;
- Provide a bridge between school and community with a strong focus on fostering socialization, independence in work skills, life skills, self-care, leisure and recreational skills,
- Provide modified curriculum and/or alternative programming, individualized to student's strengths, interests and needs

Student Profile

- Requires program emphasis on developing communication skills, social skills, daily living skills and functional academic skills
- Requires support for the social interaction and basic daily living skills and/or self-regulation
- Requires extensive instructional, assessment and environmental accommodations
- Is working toward an Ontario Secondary School Certificate of Accomplishment

Admission Criteria

A student who:

- Has been identified as exceptional through the IPRC process under the category of Intellectual: Developmental Disability;
- Requires modification to the environment and a higher level of structured monitoring, individual attention and alternative programming specific to their learning profile;
- Has had ongoing tier one and tier two interventions in a regular classroom placement; and
- Requires extensive support and program modification to access curriculum or alternative programming for the development of functional communication, literacy and numeracy skills

Program Resources

Special
Education Teacher
Educational Assistant(s)
Learning Support
Teacher

“All student's will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences.” - Achieving Excellence: Our Renewed Vision For Education in Ontario

Environmental Considerations

- Ensure the classroom is inviting, and well organized to ensure a safe and comfortable environment
- Provide information for supply and special subject teachers, (e.g. medical information, allergies, Management of Aggressive Behaviour Safety Plans)
- Post daily visual schedules (e.g. subjects, integration, field trips, special events, life skills)
- Create clearly defined, labelled activity areas (i.e. individual work spaces, group work areas, conferencing area, computer area, leisure reading/games area, break area/calming corner)
- Provide appropriately labelled, organized, and accessible learning materials, including manipulatives
- Provide strategic seating for students based on their specific academic/behavioural needs
- Provide access to computers and other assistive technology
- Post teacher, EA, SLP, OT, PT and transportation schedules as appropriate
- Provide a calming area within the classroom for reflection and calming strategies to be used
- Ensure the classroom is accessible for all students
- Ensure that each classroom is supplied with a means of communication to contact the Emergency Response Team (e.g., portable two-way radio)



Effective Academic Programming

- Understand students' cognitive and/or (as applicable) language, physical, adaptive capabilities and work in consultation with the school's Program Development Team for clarification when necessary
- Be aware of the characteristics of students with more than one exceptionality (e.g., ASD, Physical, Behaviour) and modify and accommodate for them appropriately
- Use student-driven programming, taking into consideration each student's different interests, learning profile, and level of academic functioning
- Create an individual profile of strengths and needs based on information from relevant documentation (e.g. psychological assessments, educational assessments, etc.)
- Assess for learning in order to determine a baseline or starting point for programming for each student
- Clearly indicate grade level expectations Ontario Curriculum and/or developmentally appropriate expectations from the Hawaiian Early Learning Profile Resources
- Accommodate and modify the program to suit the varying needs of each student
- Ensure programming supports the expectations outlined in the students' IEPs
- Develop knowledge of and use assistive technology and specialized equipment (e.g., iPad, Augmentative Communication Device)
- Use high interest/low vocabulary, as well as age-appropriate materials
- Develop appropriate and reasonably challenging programming, focusing on specific personalized goals and expectations
- Develop individualized short and long term goals with incentives to motivate and encourage students
- Numeracy and Literacy instruction must help students to identify relationships between concepts learned and everyday situations and make connections to activities of daily living.

Assessment for Learning

The **Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)** is a curriculum-based assessment tool. It is developed for teachers to use in conjunction with families and multi-disciplinary teams. HELP addresses six domains including cognitive, language, gross motor, fine motor, social emotional and self-help. Each domain is divided into strands of sequential skills which are linked to curriculum activities. Each strand focuses on key underlying concepts—developmental levels, strengths, and needs within each traditional domain can be easily identified for curriculum assessment and strategic planning. This criterion-referenced observational checklist is designed to provide the Developmental Education Teacher with a tool for planning ongoing instruction and assessment.

Effective Alternative Programming

- Work in consultation with the multi-disciplinary team, including parents, the educational assistants, outside agencies, and community resources to develop appropriate alternative programming
- Incorporate life skills, adaptive functioning, communication skills, augmentative communication skills, self-care, motor skills, leisure-time skills, vocational skills, and community living skills into the program to help prepare students for the future as applicable
- Provide explicit teaching of social skills with a focus on (as applicable) social boundaries, reading social cues, self esteem building, positive relationships, goal setting, making choices, gaining control, controlling impulses, reducing aggression towards self and others, etc.,
- Provide direct instruction for personal safety (e.g., social media, personal care, health and sexuality) and teach self-advocacy skills to foster independence
- Incorporate a transition plan into the students' program to support transitioning between various activities and settings (i.e., entry to school, between activities, moving from elementary to secondary, moving from one school or program to another, etc.) and schedule information sessions, visits, and future goal setting (as applicable) to support this process
- Apply task analysis to alternative programming expectations (e.g. teaching a student to return a greeting before teaching a student to spontaneously greet someone)
- Prioritize alternative programming expectations (e.g. make self-regulation a priority)
- Teach and reinforce strategies for organizational skills; implement specific strategies to help students organize materials and to develop time management skills
- Foster communication skill development focusing on body language, visual and verbal cues, social language, role modelling, etc.

Transition Planning

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140, "Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)", states that school board staff must plan for the transition between various activities and settings involving students with autism spectrum disorders.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156, "Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs", states that a transition plan must be developed for all students who have an IEP. All transition plans must be developed in consultation with the parent(s), the student (as appropriate), the postsecondary institution (where appropriate), and relevant community agencies and/or partners, as necessary. Every transition plan will identify specific transition goals, support needs, the actions required to achieve the goals, roles and responsibilities, and timelines for the implementation and/or completion of each of the identified actions.

Effective Teaching Strategies

- Use visual schedules and mini-schedules (e.g. individual small schedules to suit students' needs)
- Use materials which incorporate student interests
- Utilize independent work systems to maintain mastered tasks
- Provide verbal information paired with visual support in order to tap into different learning modalities and strengths
- Allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways (e.g. oral, augmentative communication systems, gestures, pointing, computer use, etc.)
- Use adaptive learning tools (e.g. slant boards, etc.) when necessary
- Provide frequent breaks and physical activity - prevent sitting for long periods
- Provide small and large group centers with flexible groupings
- Schedule daily routines to meet the needs of the students
- Be aware of when to use different delivery methods, being flexible when necessary (e.g. small group instruction, one-to-one instruction, hands on learning, experiential learning, etc.)
- Allow for processing time
- Use task analysis or chaining techniques (e.g. breaking a task down into its steps to be followed for completion) and use prompting hierarchies to support new learning
- Follow least preferred activities by preferred activities
- Provide multiple opportunities for re-teaching
- Maximize support and use of personnel to facilitate independence
- Incorporate strategies to support student transitions between various activities and settings (i.e., entry to school, between activities, moving from elementary to secondary, moving from one school or program to another, etc.),

Classroom Management

- Be aware of students' diagnosis, cognitive abilities, social/ emotional/cultural backgrounds and behavioural needs
- Provide and reinforce a clear, structured program with predictable routines using an individually tailored behavioural incentive program based on the student's profile
- Collect baseline and ABC data when targeting a behaviour and developing a behaviour plan with both short and long term goals backed by visual supports
- Behaviour programs may include any or all of: self-esteem building, making choices, gaining control, personal responsibility
- Provide constant reinforcement using a 4:1 positive to negative ratio and pair reinforcement with praise
- Create an environment that fosters intrinsic motivation by providing opportunities for success through appropriate individual programming
- Teach self-regulatory skills (e.g. recognizing triggers, calming strategies) and self-advocacy skills (e.g. asking for help appropriately)
- Be aware of the Management of Aggressive Behaviour Policy and the need for staff to be trained in and use BMS techniques
- Allow for structured breaks between periods that require significant concentration and self-control
- Use a nonreactive, supportive and calm approach when dealing with anger and aggression
- Provide opportunities to build and develop relationships with others (e.g. - integrating with positive peer group)
- Work with the Program Development Team to develop programs and to access outside agencies when necessary
- Ensure consistency in program implementation among the classroom team

Assessment and Evaluation

- Use of Alternative Report Card to report on student programming
- Ensure that assessment and evaluation practices are linked to those outlined on the IEP
- Develop and use evaluation tools which measure student growth (e.g. ongoing anecdotal checklists; checklists to target specific skills; rubrics; student portfolios; one to one teacher conferences)
- Use assessment tools to inform program development (e.g. HELP, WIAT III, Dolch Word Lists, Developmental Reading Assessment, PRIME, etc.)
- Allow students to demonstrate learning in a variety of ways (e.g. oral, product, demonstration, drawings, maps, collages, dioramas, poster charts, videos, etc.)
- Provide achievable, measurable and appropriately challenging expectations
- Provide assessment using methods suitable to the needs of the student (e.g. allow for oral tests, portfolios, work samples, scribe, use of pictures, use of computers for written responses, reword questions, iPad, etc.)
- Use ABC (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequences) charts, graphing data, behaviour plans and tally sheets for data collection for behaviours of concerns
- Provide appropriate accommodations for assessment as outlined in the IEP

“Every Student is unique and each must have opportunities to achieve success according to his or her own interests, abilities and goals.”

- Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools

Integration

- Be aware that some students may integrate more than others, but that the goal is to promote integration
- Ensure students integrate into classes with age appropriate peers in order to foster appropriate social skills development
- Provide the regular classroom teachers with specific background information about the student, guidelines for interaction, specific behaviour programs, and goals for integration, as needed
- Provide ongoing communication with the regular classroom teacher in order to provide guidelines and consultation with student, teacher and educational assistant
- Involve students in whole-school initiatives (e.g. assemblies, student-led conferences, school improvement plans, heritage festivals, Author's Day, special events, etc.)
- Provide reverse integration opportunities (e.g. reading buddies, cooking buddies, cooperative games, peer tutors, etc.)
- Arrange for classroom EAs to work with students in the regular class to support integration
- Provide clear expectations that are outlined to EAs who accompany students to integration (e.g. student goals, respecting regular classroom teacher's approach and crisis management plan, etc.)
- Support peer awareness activities to teach students how to support one another with empathy and respect
- Identify specific goals for peer interaction and leadership through peer training, prompting and planning
- Support peer mediated learning opportunities (e.g. Peer Pals, Best Buddies and Special Olympics Peer Coaches)

System Support

DE Resource Team

The Developmental Education Resource Team provides support to Developmental Education Teachers on a referral basis and offers professional development to staff throughout the TVDSB. To this end, Teachers on Special Assignment provide in-service to teachers and support staff on an individual and small group basis and offer professional development sessions throughout the school year.

Speech and Language Pathology

As part of the spectrum of student services provided by Thames Valley District School Board, Speech and Language Services staff support students in JK-8 using an educational model of service delivery, and a variety of intervention methods. Students are referred for Speech and Language Services through school-based Program Development Teams. SLP's work with classroom teachers and other support staff using an integrative approach which incorporates goals as a basis for speech and language intervention.

Psychological Services

Psychological Services staff provide ongoing consultation to teacher, learning coordinators, principals, and parents regarding referred students. In the consultation process, parents and educational personnel may receive assistance in the interpretation of psychological assessment results and implications for classroom programming. Psychological services staff also support problem solving, decision making and program development for students with learning, social-emotional, behavioural, and intellectual needs. Individual psychological assessments may be completed upon the recommendation of the Program Development Team in consultation with Psychological Services staff.

School Counselling and Social Work Services

School Support Counsellors, FNMI Counsellors and Social Workers provide short-term individual, family and group counselling to help students who are experiencing social-emotional and mental health barriers to learning. Supports are provided for issues such as mental health concerns, emotions management, coping skills, peer problems, conflict resolution, social skills, life skills, self-esteem and family concerns. Intervention approaches are strength-based, focused on building resiliency and connecting to community resources. School Counselling and Social Work Services can be accessed upon referral by the school team, parent/guardian or student (over the age of 16).

Acronyms Related to Special Education:

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

DD: Developmental Disability

D/HH: Deaf and Hard of Hearing

EA: Educational Assistant

IEP: Individual Education Plan

IPRC: Identification, Placement and Review Committee

LD: Learning Disability

LHIN: Local Health Integration Network

LST: Learning Support Teacher

MID: Mild Intellectual Disability

OT: Occupational Therapist

PDT: Program Development Team

PT: Physiotherapist

SLP: Speech and Language Pathologist

SEA: Special Equipment Amount

SEAC: Special Education Advisory Committee

TVDSB: Thames Valley District School Board