

## Special Considerations for Individual Planning

### Students with Medical Diagnoses: Considerations for Reporting

Funding categories are established to assist school districts in providing appropriate education programs to students with special needs. These categories are designed to focus on the educational needs of students regardless of the original cause(s) of those needs.

For example, a student who is hard of hearing should receive the appropriate services, regardless of the cause of the hearing impairment. Similarly, if a student presents atypical behaviours, or intellectual impairment, it is the intensity of the disability and the interventions provided that will dictate the category in which the student is reported for funding purposes.

The current 'categorical' system is not intended to specifically identify all medically diagnosed conditions and syndromes which may have an impact on the student's educational needs. These conditions and syndromes include, but are not limited to, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAS/FAE), Rett's Syndrome, Asperger's Syndrome, Tourette's Syndrome, and others. Medical diagnosis by itself does not determine the special education services required.

The designation of students for funding purposes should involve careful determination of the nature and extent of their disabling condition(s) and the nature and extent of educational interventions required. Students with medically diagnosed conditions should be identified for funding purposes in the educational category that best reflects the type and intensity of educational interventions documented in the IEP.

For funding purposes, students should be identified according to the following general guidelines:

- (a) Students who have an identifiable disability or medical diagnosis, whose needs are being met through the support of the regular classroom teacher and/or learning assistance, counselling, speech-language pathology or other separately funded services, should not be included for funding purposes in a designated funding category.
- (b) Students who present with conditions, which may or may not carry a specific categorical designation, should be identified for funding purposes in the special education category that best reflects the type and intensity of interventions documented in the IEP.

## Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

### *Definition*

A student is considered to have a mild intellectual disability if intellectual functioning is -2.01 to -3.00 standard deviations below the norm on an individually administered Level C assessment instrument of intellectual functioning, and there is delayed adaptive behaviour and functioning of similar degree. While individual needs will differ, many students with mild intellectual disabilities may require specific instruction for the acquisition of gross and fine motor skills, communication skills, assistance with development of social skills, including personal independence, social responsibility and life skills, as well as with reasoning skills, memory, problem solving and conceptualizing skills.

To be eligible for supplemental funding for Mild Intellectual Disabilities the following criteria must be met:

- the student must meet the criteria in the above definition;
- and**
- a current IEP must be in place;
- and**
- ongoing special education service(s) must be provided. These services should be outlined in the IEP and directly related to the student's identified special need(s). Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

The special education service(s) must be in addition to any services provided under formula funding based on total student enrolment (e.g., learning assistance, counselling).

### *Identification and Assessment*

A student with a mild intellectual disability will not always be identified before entering the school system. Difficulties with adaptive behaviour may not have been previously documented. Adaptive behaviour is the "effectiveness or degree to which the individual meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility..." (American Association for Mental Retardation (AAMR)).

A psychoeducational assessment will be used to determine a student's level of functioning and should be based on a variety of measures of intellectual ability and adaptive behaviour, as well as information from the family and, where available, other service providers. Instruments such as the

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Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales and the Adaptive Behavior Scale (AAMR) should be used in the assessment of an individual's adaptive behaviour. The most frequently used tests in assessing intellectual ability are the most current revisions of the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence scales.

***Planning and Implementation***

Most students with mild intellectual disabilities benefit from and learn best from being with age peers, but generally also require additional intervention. As they proceed through elementary school, their IEPs should specify any modifications or adaptations to programs, use of special materials, and the measures of progress. Parents must be given the opportunity to participate in the planning process, and to the extent that they are able, students should also participate.

The older the student, the greater the need for concrete educational objectives. At the secondary level, a student with a mild intellectual disability should have the opportunity and option to access a variety of educational and social experiences both within the school and in the community. For many students, continued participation in academic areas, with appropriately adapted programs and support where needed, is both reasonable and desirable. For other students, increasing community integration and work experience/work placement opportunities is most enabling (see Section G45: Work Experience/Job Training).

***Evaluation and Reporting***

Many students with mild intellectual disabilities will take part in the regular program with some adaptations. Evaluation will be based on the regular standards (i.e., the extent to which the learning outcomes for the course are attained). The method of evaluation will be consistent with the IEP and with ministry reporting policies in respect to the use of comments and/or letter grades.

Some students may require extensive modifications to parts of their program so that some of their learning outcomes will be substantially different from the regular curriculum. In these cases, evaluation will be based on the degree to which the individualized outcomes are achieved. In these cases, evaluation will be referenced to individually set standards.

Reports to parents should be provided on the same schedule used for all students. Progress should be reported with respect to all components of the program, and with reference to progress in relation to IEP goals. Reports should indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program. All personnel directly involved in the ongoing educational program (e.g., the classroom teacher, specialist teacher, speech-language pathologist) should report on student progress.

### **Personnel**

The ministry expects that with sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be capable of including students with mild intellectual disabilities and providing a program in which they can be successful, provided that specialized support is available when needed. Inservice training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the necessary skills and understandings which the classroom teacher may require.

Teachers with responsibilities for supporting students with intellectual disabilities should fulfill the qualifications described for Learning Assistance (see Section D1: Learning Assistance Services). In addition, they should have advanced coursework in:

- the characteristics and needs of students with intellectual disabilities;
- specialized instructional methodologies and technologies; and adaptation and modification of programs for students with intellectual disabilities; and
- functional life skills and career development.

### **Teacher assistants**

Teacher assistants who work in classrooms with students with mild intellectual disabilities should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- the social, emotional, and educational implications of intellectual disabilities;
- functional life skills and career development; and
- technological support.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop expertise in these and related areas.



## Students with Moderate to Severe/Profound Intellectual Disabilities

### *Definition*

A student is considered to have a moderate to severe/profound intellectual disability if intellectual functioning is greater than 3 standard deviations below the norm on an individually administered Level C assessment instrument of intellectual functioning, and there is delayed adaptive behaviour and functioning of similar degree. As individuals and as a group, these students have particular learning characteristics. They require support in the development of communication skills, cognitive skills, fine and gross motor skills, self-care, life skills and socialization skills. Generally, a student with this level of intellectual functioning is also significantly delayed in social-emotional development. There may also be accompanying sensory, physical and health disabilities. Specific instruction is needed for many or all life skills activities.

To be eligible for supplemental funding for Moderate to Severe/Profound Intellectual Disabilities the following criteria must be met:

- the student must meet the criteria for the above definition;  
**and**
- a current IEP must be in place;  
**and**
- ongoing special education service(s) must be provided. These services should be outlined in the IEP and directly related to the student's identified special need(s). The special education service(s) must be in addition to any services provided under formula funding based on total student enrolment (e.g., learning assistance, counselling). Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet this definition.

### *Identification and Assessment*

A formal psychoeducational assessment will determine the student's level of functioning and must include information regarding:

- academic and life skills;
- communication skills;
- sensory disorders;
- social-emotional development; and
- specific aptitudes.

This assessment should be based on a variety of measures of intellectual ability and adaptive behaviour. Adaptive behaviour is the "effectiveness or degree to which the individual meets the standards of personal independence

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and social responsibility..." (AAMR). Instruments such as the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales and the Adaptive Behaviour Scale (AAMR) should be used to assess an individual's adaptive behaviour. The most frequently used tests in assessing intellectual ability are the most current revisions of the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence scales. A medical assessment should also be carried out to provide an indication of visual, auditory, motor or other physical needs which would affect the IEP.

### ***Planning and Implementation***

Students with moderate to severe/profound intellectual disabilities can usually learn many appropriate skills and behaviours, and can benefit from being with students without disabilities. However, they require additional intervention beyond integration and socialization. In preparation for an IEP, teachers may want to consider implementing a planning mechanism such as the McGill Action Planning System (MAPS). This procedure is effective in identifying the student's strengths and needs and in eliciting involvement and commitment from peers.

As these students proceed through elementary school, their IEPs should specify modified curricula, adapted materials and the measures of progress. Some of the life-skills training for elementary students with moderate to severe/profound intellectual disabilities may take place in other environments, including outside the regular classroom. However, care should always be taken to ensure maximum opportunities for social integration with their classroom age peers.

If a student with a severe to profound intellectual disability has a sensory impairment, physical disability or medical/health needs, support services from a teacher assistant as well as the expertise of an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, a speech-language pathologist, or an itinerant specialist may be required. These other professionals should work with the school-based team so that joint planning can take place and information can be shared.

At the secondary level, a student should have access to a range of meaningful educational and social experiences within the school and community. Many of these students will benefit from participating in elective areas. The extent of the student's participation should be determined with reference to the goals in the student's IEP. In a school with a "home room" mechanism, students should be included in a home room, even if they spend much of their school day receiving more specialized services such as intensive work experience. Care should be taken to ensure maximum opportunities for social integration.

The older the student or the more severe the disability, the greater the need for functional educational objectives. Since the skills taught should be those that afford many opportunities for practice, and since teaching should



be in preparation for adult life in the community, the student will need an increasing percentage of educational instruction in community environments.

Job training programs are essential if the goal is for the student to benefit from post-secondary work placements. A student with a moderate, severe or profound intellectual disability should participate in work experience/job training, with support where required (see Section G45: Work Experience/Job Training). Generally, job training and pre-employment skills should begin at an earlier age than for age peers. For these students particularly, the involvement of parents in life/vocational planning is essential.

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

It is expected that districts and schools will include students with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities in regular evaluation and reporting based on the goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the IEP. Since extensive program modifications are usually required, evaluation should be based on the student's progress toward the goals and objectives outlined in the IEP. If a student is taking part in the regular program with some adaptations, evaluation should be based on the regular standards (i.e., the extent to which learning outcomes were attained). The method of evaluation will be consistent with the IEP and with ministry reporting policies in respect to the use of comments and/or letter grades.

Reports to parents should be provided on the same schedule used for all students. Progress should be reported with respect to all components of the program, and with reference to progress in relation to IEP goals. Reports should indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program. All personnel directly involved in the ongoing educational program (e.g., classroom teacher, specialist teacher, speech-language pathologist) should report on student progress.

Student progress should be evaluated using a range of assessment techniques. These may include criterion-based measures, curriculum-based assessments, teacher observations, samples of student work and the extent to which IEP goals have been achieved.

### ***Personnel***

#### ***Teachers***

The ministry expects that with sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be capable of including students with moderate to severe/profound intellectual disabilities and providing a program in which they can be successful, provided that specialized support is available when needed. Inservice training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the necessary skills and understandings which the classroom teacher may require.

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Specialist teachers with responsibilities for supporting students with intellectual disabilities should fulfill the qualifications described for learning assistance (see Section D1: Learning Assistance Services). In addition, they should have advanced coursework in:

- the characteristics and needs of students with intellectual disabilities;
- specialized instructional methodologies and technologies; and adaptations and modification of programs for students with intellectual disabilities; and
- functional life skills and career development.

Where adaptive devices or technological support are required, the ministry expects all personnel to be able to demonstrate competency in their use. Opportunities for inservice to attain these competencies are essential in these situations.

Recent and ongoing technological advances in adaptive devices related to computer access, environmental controls and augmented communication have greatly enhanced learning opportunities for students with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities. It is expected that specialist staff will stay informed about current developments and introduce new technology as appropriate and as resources permit.

### Teacher assistants

Teacher assistants who work in classrooms with students with moderate to severe/profound intellectual disabilities should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- the social, emotional, and educational implications of intellectual disabilities;
- functional life skills and career development; and
- technological support.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop expertise in these and related areas.

## Students with Learning Disabilities

### Definition

The following definition of learning disabilities is used by the Ministry of Education:

"Learning disabilities" is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviours, social perception and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (e.g., cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences."

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1988

- \* for the purposes of this document the term "learning disability" includes conditions described as dyslexia, dyscalculia or dysgraphia, and may include students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD).

Learning disabilities vary considerably in their severity and impact on learning. Students with mild to moderate learning disabilities can be successful when provided with adapted classroom instruction combined with appropriate support by a learning assistance or school-based resource teacher. Students with severe learning disabilities will generally require more intensive intervention.

Students whose learning disabilities have not been identified and addressed early frequently exhibit secondary emotional and behavioural difficulties.

To be eligible for supplemental funding for Severe Learning Disabilities, a student must meet the definition given above and the following criteria must be met:

- severe difficulties in the acquisition of basic academic skills and/or school performance persist after classroom-based remedial interventions, curricular adaptations and learning assistance support.

The severity of these academic difficulties must be such that students demonstrate:

- ✓ persistent difficulties in the acquisition of pre-academic skills such as recognition of letters and numbers in the early primary years; and/or

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- ✓ persistent difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing and/or arithmetic skills in the later primary years; and/or
- ✓ a discrepancy of 2 standard deviations between estimated learning potential and academic achievement as measured by norm-referenced instruments in Grades 3-12;

**and**

- there is a significant weakness in one or more cognitive process (e.g., perception, memory, attention, receptive or expressive language abilities, visual-spatial abilities) relative to overall intellectual functioning, as measured by norm-referenced assessment instruments, which directly impacts learning and school performance;

**and**

- the criteria listed above are not the result of other disabling conditions or external influences described in the definition above;

**and**

- the student is receiving specific additional services directed at addressing the learning disability (reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet this definition);

**and**

- a current IEP is in place.

### ***Students with Severe Learning Disabilities***

The ministry estimates that students with severe learning disabilities comprise 1-2% of the school population and will require more intensive support.

A psychoeducational assessment must be undertaken to determine the presence, nature, severity and educational implications of a severe learning disability. Prior to referral for psychoeducational assessment, the classroom teacher will have attempted alternate strategies, consulted with the parent and colleagues, and requested the involvement of the learning assistance/resource teacher for additional assessment, consultation or pre-referral interventions.

### ***Identification and Assessment***

Most students included in the Severe Learning Disabilities category will be identified by the school system through the progressive assessment process described in Section C. In some cases, students will have been identified prior to school entry through assessments in clinical settings.

If these measures prove insufficient, the school-based team will refer the student for assessment. The assessment is often multidisciplinary, supplementing the psychoeducational assessment with information from the speech-language pathologist or the occupational therapist.

The assessment of a student with a learning disability should:

- integrate information from a number of sources (eg., the family, health, social-emotional adjustment, developmental history);
- assess overall intellectual functioning, specific cognitive abilities, pre-academic or academic skills and socio-emotional status;
- assess the learning strengths and weaknesses, and their implications for learning; and
- contribute to the process of planning and evaluating the education program.

### ***Planning and Implementation***

Students with severe learning disabilities require an educational plan which builds on their strengths while remediating or compensating for their area of disability. Their IEP should reflect these.

Students with severe learning disabilities should be supported on a regular basis by a specialist teacher. Typically, the program for a student with a severe learning disability includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- direct remedial, corrective, tutorial or skill-building instruction;
- adapted, modified or supplementary curriculum and materials;
- alternate instructional and/or evaluation strategies, including adjudicated provincial examinations;
- use of equipment, including computer and audiovisual technology;
- social skills training; and
- learning strategies.

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

#### **Evaluating student progress**

In most cases students will take part in the regular program with the necessary adaptations (e.g., alternate evaluation methods). Evaluation will be based on the regular standards (i.e., extent to which learning outcomes were attained). The method of evaluation will be consistent with the IEP and with ministry reporting policies in respect to the use of comments and/or letter grades.

Some students may require extensive modifications to parts of their program so that some of their learning outcomes will be substantially different from the regular curriculum. In these cases, evaluation will be based on the degree to which the individualized outcomes are achieved.

### **Reporting**

Reports to parents should be provided in the same format and on the same schedule used for all students. Progress should be reported with respect to all components of the program, and with reference to progress in relation to IEP goals. Reports should indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program, as well as performance relative to widely-held expectations. All personnel directly involved in the ongoing educational program (e.g., classroom teacher, specialist teacher, speech-language pathologist) should report on student progress (see Section H37: Appendix F).

### **Personnel**

The ministry expects that with sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be capable of including most students with learning disabilities and providing a program in which they can be successful, provided that specialized support is available when needed. Inservice training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the necessary skills and understandings which the classroom teacher may require.

Teachers with responsibilities for supporting students with severe learning disabilities should fulfill the qualifications described for Learning Assistance teacher (see Section D1: Learning Assistance Services). In addition, their qualifications should include advanced coursework in:

- characteristics and needs of students with learning disabilities; and
- specialized instructional and remedial strategies, technologies, materials and curricular adaptations.

As well, they should have training and demonstrated skills in:

- social skills development and behaviour management;
- co-operative planning and collaborative consultation; and
- assessment, classroom management and motivation.

### **Teacher assistants**

Teacher assistants working with students with learning disabilities should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- an understanding of learning disabilities;
- collaborative and communication skills;
- strategies for motivating students; and
- behaviour management skills.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop opportunities in these and related areas.

**Resources**

Students who are print-handicapped because of a severe learning disability may be eligible to receive audiotape material from the Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (see Section H13: Appendix C).





## Students Who are Gifted

### *Definition*

A student is considered gifted when she/he possesses demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of exceptionally high capability with respect to intellect, creativity, or the skills associated with specific disciplines. Students who are gifted often demonstrate outstanding abilities in more than one area. They may demonstrate extraordinary intensity of focus in their particular areas of talent or interest. However, they may also have accompanying disabilities and should not be expected to have strengths in all areas of intellectual functioning.

These students must be appropriately identified and be receiving an additional special educational service on a regular and ongoing basis to be eligible for special education funding in this category. Current funding allows for up to 2% of total student enrolment for supplemental funding in this category if supplemental services are provided to identified students on a regular basis, and a current Individual Education Plan is in place. Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

### *Identification and Assessment*

Early identification of students who are gifted is an important element in planning and delivering appropriate educational programs for these students. Some gifted students whose abilities are not identified and addressed early may exhibit secondary emotional and behavioural difficulties. District screening and identification procedures should be in place to ensure consistency of access to programs designed to support gifted students.

Every effort should be made to ensure that screening and identification procedures are unbiased with respect to language, culture, gender, physical ability, learning or other disability.

No single criterion should be established for entry into or exclusion from services for students who are gifted. Rather, identification and assessment should be carried out using multiple criteria and information from a variety of sources, all of which are valid components for identification. These should include several of the following:

- teacher observations including anecdotal records, checklists, and inventories;
- records of student achievement including assignments, portfolios, grades and outstanding talents, interests and accomplishments;
- nominations by educators, parents, peers and/or self; and
- interview of parents and students.

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Formal assessments to Level C should be undertaken as a final step in the process (see Section H7, Appendix B). These should include assessment of cognitive ability, achievement, aptitude and creativity.

A student who is talented in areas other than academics should also have an assessment of intellectual abilities as it is important information for educational planning.

### *Planning and Implementation*

Districts should provide differentiated services to meet the diverse needs of the exceptionally capable learner. Since students who are gifted form a heterogeneous population, their individual needs, experiences, aptitudes and interests vary.

Programs for students who are gifted often require a blend of opportunities available both in the school and in the community. The more extraordinary the abilities of the student, the more necessary it becomes to expand the options beyond the regular classroom. Differentiated curriculum opportunities need to be designed and programming needs to be varied and flexible (classroom-based, school-based, district-based). Since no single program modification model can provide strategies that will apply to content, process, product, pacing, and learning environment, teachers of gifted students will need to draw from one or more models in order to provide an appropriate educational program that meets the individual needs of the student. This should be reflected in the student's IEP.

Regardless of how services are delivered, there are some common elements which characterize an individualized program appropriate for a student who is gifted:

- it is different in pace, scope, and complexity, in keeping with the nature and extent of the exceptionality;
- it provides opportunities for students to interact socially and academically with both age peers and peers of similar abilities;
- it addresses both the cognitive and affective domains;
- it incorporates adaptations and/or extensions to content, process, product, pacing and learning environment; and
- it goes beyond the walls of a school and into the larger community.

Supplemental services for a gifted student should contain some of the following elements, but are not limited to these:

- independent guided education;
- specialist teachers in resource centres or resource rooms;
- district and community classes;

- special groupings which provide opportunities for learning with intellectual peers;
- mentorships;
- consultative services to assist teachers in expanding experiences in the regular classroom;
- accelerating/telescoping/compacting some or all of the student's program;
- opportunities to challenge courses when appropriate; and
- opportunities to take enriched courses and to participate in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or honours courses.

It is important to recognize the individual characteristics of school districts and their communities in designing services for gifted students. For example, students who are gifted may benefit from the use of information technology, which will increasingly facilitate access to information sources not readily available in all communities.

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

It is expected that districts and schools will include gifted students in regular evaluation and reporting. If there are extensive program modifications, evaluation should be based on the degree to which the individual learning outcomes are achieved. Reports of student progress should be based on the instructional objectives and procedures outlined in the student's IEP. Reports should indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program, as well as performance relative to widely-held expectations. All personnel directly involved in the ongoing educational program should report on student progress.

### ***Personnel***

The ministry expects that with sufficient training and experience classroom teachers will be capable of including most students who are gifted, and providing a program in which they can be successful, provided that specialized support is available when needed. Inservice training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the necessary skills and understandings which the classroom teacher may require.

Support teachers with specialized training and experience in gifted education may serve as helping teachers/consultants, and may work in resource centres or with specialized cross-school groupings or special courses. Teachers with responsibility for supporting programs for gifted students should fulfill the qualifications described for learning assistance (see Section D1:

Learning Assistance Services). In addition, these qualifications should include coursework in:

- the nature of giftedness and the needs of gifted students; and
- strategies for meeting the educational and affective needs of gifted students.

#### **Teacher assistants**

Teacher assistants working with students who are gifted should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- an understanding of giftedness;
- collaborative and communication skills;
- strategies for motivating students; and
- behaviour management skills.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop opportunities in these and related areas.

## Students with Behaviour Disorders, including Rehabilitation Programs

### Definition

Behaviour disorder is a generic term which refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders. They reflect dysfunctional interactions between the student and one or more elements of the environment, including the classroom, school, family, peers and community.

Behaviour disorders vary in their severity and effect on learning, interpersonal relations and personal adjustment. Students with mild behavioural difficulties can usually be supported through counselling and school-based services. Students with the most severe behavioural difficulties may be included in the Severe Behaviour Category (see Section E27: Students with Severe Behaviour Disorders).

### Moderate behaviour disorders

The Ministry of Education recognizes that 1-2% of students may have a moderate behaviour disorder. Students can be included in the Moderate Behaviour Disorder category for supplemental funding when, through the assessment process (see below), they meet all of the following criteria:

- They demonstrate one or more of the following:
  - ✓ behaviours such as aggression (of a physical, emotional or sexual nature) and/or hyperactivity;
  - ✓ negative or undesirable internalized psychological states such as anxiety, stress-related disorders, and depression;
  - ✓ behaviours related to social problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, child abuse or neglect; and/or
  - ✓ behaviours related to other disabling conditions, such as thought disorders or neurological or physiological conditions;
- and**
- the frequency or severity of the above behaviours have a very disruptive effect on the classroom learning environment, social relations or personal adjustment;
- and**
- they demonstrate the above behaviour(s) over an extended period of time, in more than one setting and with more than one person (teachers, peers);
- and**
- they have not responded to support/interventions provided through usual classroom management strategies.

In order to be eligible for supplemental special education funding, students must be receiving an additional special education service on a regular basis, and a current IEP must be in place. Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

### **Rehabilitation Programs**

Rehabilitation programs are jointly funded by the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Education. Students can be included in the Rehabilitation funding category when, through the assessment process, it has been determined they meet all of the criteria for students with moderate behaviour disorders, there is funding for the program from the Ministry of Social Services, and a current IEP is in place.

### **Identification and Assessment**

**Note: the identification and assessment process may need to be modified, expedited or waived temporarily when a student is endangering the safety of self or others.**

The process of identification and assessment should focus on behaviours which clearly are beyond common disciplinary problems or the result of ineffectual classroom management practices.

Identification and assessment of students with behaviour disorders often begins at the classroom level, although these students are often identified in the home or community. The teacher's observations should be incorporated into an identification and assessment process for educational purposes, as should the assessments of other staff. The behaviours in question should not be transitory but should generalize to other settings and individuals.

The teacher will first consult with the parents and colleagues and attempt alternate strategies to manage the behaviour in the classroom. If these prove unsuccessful, the teacher may seek assistance from other school-based services or from the school-based team.

The school-based team may provide further consultation, access other school or district support services, and/or request additional assessment. It may also be appropriate at this stage to involve the Ministry of Social Services, child and youth mental health services, community agencies and the medical profession in the identification and intervention process.

Personnel conducting assessment at this stage should have qualifications required for the use of Level C tests (see Section H7, Appendix B).

The formal assessment should :

- analyze the student's functional behaviours in various settings and with different people who regularly are a part of her/his environment;
- integrate information from the different aspects of a student's life;

- focus on strengths as well as needs;
- rule out or address other conditions which may be precipitating or contributing to the behaviour (e.g., hearing loss, learning disabilities, side-effects of medication);
- clarify the characteristics of the behaviour disorder;
- address possible medical or health impairments;
- specify whether the student meets the criteria for moderate behaviour disorder (or another diagnosis); and
- contribute to the process of planning and evaluating the educational program.

The findings of the formal assessment should be summarized in a report which is shared with the parents, the teacher, the student (where appropriate) and the school-based team.

### ***Planning and Implementation***

In accordance with the process described in Section C, planning is done collaboratively by the teacher, case manager, relevant school and district staff, parent and, when appropriate, relevant inter-ministerial and community agencies and the student. Because these students are difficult to serve educationally, support services should be provided to the student, the school, the home and community agencies on an integrated basis.

The Ministry of Education requires that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) be developed for each student included in the Moderate Behaviour Disorder category. The IEP will describe:

- current behavioural and learning strengths and needs;
- the goals for the student's program referenced to measurable objectives;
- the behavioural strategies used to achieve the goals;
- if applicable, specification of the components of the curriculum that will be adapted and/or modified;
- the resources needed to support the student;
- the names of staff responsible (school, community agencies) for implementing the plan;
- the role of the parents in supporting the plan;
- means of evaluating the efficacy of interventions and a timeline for evaluation;
- decisions regarding where the plan will be implemented; and
- plans for transitions.

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Intervention programs for students with moderate behaviour disorders should be implemented in the settings in which the behaviours are occurring, rather than through a change in placement. However, integrated approaches should not place the student, his/her peers, or those providing services in an "at risk" position (see Section G37: Removal for Health and Safety).

Some of these students may require more specialized services, including part or full-time placement in specialized learning environments (resource room, teaching and evaluation centre, or rehabilitation programs provided in co-ordination with the Ministry of Social Services) until the student can be assisted to re-enter the regular classroom on a full-time basis and/or successfully enter the world of work.

Students with moderate behaviour disorders should be supported by a specialist teacher and be provided with, but not be limited to, one or more of the following additional services:

- direct support in the classroom by a teacher specialist or an assistant to promote behavioural change through implementing the plan outlined in the IEP;
- placement in a program designed to promote behavioural change and implement the IEP; and/or
- ongoing, individually implemented social skills training, and/or behavioural and learning strategies.

The above may be complemented/co-ordinated with:

- in-depth therapy, counselling and/or support for the family in the community;
- adapted or supplementary curriculum and materials; and
- alternate instructional and/or evaluation strategies.

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

In most cases students with moderate behaviour disorders will take part in the regular program, although some adaptation may be necessary (e.g., alternate evaluation methods). Evaluation will be based on the regular standards (i.e., extent to which learning outcomes were attained). The method of evaluation will be consistent with the IEP and with ministry policies in respect to the use of comments and/or letter grades.

Some students may require extensive modifications to parts of their program so that some of their learning outcomes will be substantially different from other students. In these cases, evaluation will be based on the degree to which the individualized outcomes are achieved.

Reports should be provided in the same format and on the same schedule used for all students. Progress should be reported with respect to all components of the program, and with reference to IEP goals. Reports should



indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program, as well as performance relative to widely-held expectations (see Section H37: Appendix F).

### **Personnel**

The ministry expects that with sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be capable of including most students with behaviour disorders and providing a program in which they can be successful, provided that support is available when needed. Inservice training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of skills required.

Boards should ensure that teachers whose responsibilities are primarily concerned with programming for students with moderate behaviour disorders have appropriate training. These teachers should possess general training in the area of special education with additional coursework in the education of students with behaviour disorders, motivational techniques, behaviour management, and precision teaching.

The skill set for teachers in these programs should include:

- behavioural observation, analysis, strategies and management;
- consultative and collaborative skills;
- direction/supervision of behavioural intervention programs;
- adaptation of curriculum to meet a wide range of student learning needs; and
- counselling skills.

### **Child and youth counsellors**

Child and youth counsellors in the Rehabilitation Resources Program should possess undergraduate university training in counselling and human development.

### **Teacher assistants**

Teacher assistants working with students with moderate behaviour disorders should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned including:

- an understanding of behaviour disorders;
- observational, motivational, and behaviour management skills; and
- communicative and collaborative skills.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop opportunities in these and related areas.



## Students with Severe Behaviour Disorders

### Definition

Students with severe behaviour disorders who are eligible to be claimed in this funding category are those who exhibit:

**either**

- antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour in the school environment and in most other environments, consistently/persistently over time;

**or**

- severe mental health conditions which manifest themselves in profound withdrawal or other internalizing behaviours. These students generally have histories of profound problems, and present as very vulnerable, fragile students who are seriously 'at risk' in classroom situations without extensive support.

In addition to meeting one of the conditions above to be eligible for supplementary funding, these students must also exhibit behaviours which are:

- serious enough to be known to school and school district personnel and other community agencies and to warrant intensive interventions by other community agencies beyond the school;

**and**

- a serious risk to themselves or others, and/or with behaviours that significantly interfere with their academic progress and that of other students;

**and**

- beyond the normal capacity of the school to manage, provided "normal capacity" is seen to include the typical special education interventions such as school-based counselling, rehabilitation programs, the use of alternate settings, and other means traditionally available in the school environment.

Students in this category should be recognized as those most in need from a community perspective, and should have access to intensive, co-ordinated school/community intervention. These interventions should be based on co-ordinated, inter-ministerial assessment planning and intervention processes which are required to manage and maintain the students in school and in their community.

Students are eligible in this funding category only if the school district can demonstrate that it is incurring extraordinary costs related to delivering the students' educational programs. Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

The following are also required:

- Development and implementation of an IEP, which is co-ordinated with intervention/care plans developed by appropriate community agencies in collaboration with the family.
- Evidence of a co-ordinated, cross-ministry, community response plan.
- Documentation must include previous plans and interventions, to demonstrate that the district has exhausted its own resources and capacity to manage within the typical range of special education interventions.
- Evidence of a planned inter-agency review process, in a stated time frame, recognizing that many behavioural programs will be ameliorated if the interventions are appropriate.

The IEP should include the elements outlined for moderate behaviour disorders (see Section E21: Students with Behaviour Disorders, including Rehabilitation Programs).

Evidence of inter-ministerial involvement, without intensive and collaborative inter-ministerial planning and service co-ordination, is not sufficient in itself to warrant funding in this category.

Placement in this funding category is not intended to be static from year to year, as it is expected that an intensive and co-ordinated approach will result in behavioural changes. Reviews should be conducted at least quarterly, and more frequently if warranted. Districts may claim students in subsequent years in this category only if they are justified in doing so because of particular circumstances surrounding the intensity of each student's case management.

### ***Identification and Assessment***

**Note: the identification and assessment process may need to be modified, expedited or waived temporarily when a student is endangering the safety of self or others.**

Initial identification of these students may begin in the classroom, although they are often identified in the home or community. Teacher observations and perceptions should be fully documented in consultation with the school-based team.

In addition, the behavioural status of the student should be verified by school district or community based personnel qualified to administer Level C tests.

### ***Planning and Implementation***

School districts are advised to plan their resource allocation to allow them to respond quickly to emerging cases requiring a community response throughout the year. Since the expectation is that resources and interventions

provided will result in behavioural change, it is recommended that resources not be tied on an ongoing basis to a particular school or setting, but that there be sufficient flexibility to move resources as necessary when new priorities emerge.

### ***Personnel***

Personnel should, at minimum, meet the standards described under "Moderate Behaviour Disorders" (see Section E21: Students with Behaviour Disorders, including Rehabilitation Programs).



## Students with Multiple Disabilities:

### Those Who are Physically Dependent with Multiple Needs (Dependent)

#### **Definition**

A student with dependent needs is completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs. She/he will require assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and personal hygiene. Without such assistance and personal care support, attendance at school would not be possible. Many students may also require health care as defined in the *Inter-Ministerial Protocols*. The estimated prevalence in British Columbia of school-age students requiring this very intense level of service is .07% of the student population.

These students must be receiving an additional special educational service on a regular and ongoing basis to be eligible for special education funding in this category, and a current IEP must be in place.

Some students are born with conditions or disabilities that make them dependent, while others acquire conditions or disabilities. For some students, increasing independence as they learn and grow is a reasonable expectation. For other students, decreasing independence may occur due to degenerative conditions or terminal illness.

To be eligible for supplemental funding in this category, the following conditions must be met:

- the student must meet the above eligibility criteria;  
**and**
- a current IEP must be in place;  
**and**
- the student must be receiving specific additional service directed at the identified special needs. Direct, ongoing special education service(s) must be provided. These services should be outlined in the IEP and directly related to the student's identified special need(s). The special education service(s) must be in addition to any services provided under formula funding based on total student enrolment (e.g., learning assistance, counselling). Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

#### **Identification and Assessment**

A student who has been formally identified and assessed as having dependent needs is considered by the Ministry of Education for special education funding beyond that provided for low-incidence conditions.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

Assessments should integrate current, relevant information related to their intellectual, social/emotional, sensory, physical and communicative abilities, as well as their ability to perform activities of daily living at school. There must be an Individual Education Plan that recognizes the broad range of intellectual abilities of the student, and that addresses the specific educational, health and personal care needs as well as the strategies to address those needs.

Developing an appropriate plan for a student with multiple needs frequently requires input from a number of specialists who are not typically part of a school-based team. These might include medical professionals, representatives of the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Health, and individuals with expertise in augmentative/alternative communication. However, for ongoing management the team should include only key personnel.

Careful documentation and clear procedures are required to address the health needs of these students while in school. Therefore, the following should be incorporated into the planning:

- available medical assessments;
- health care plans; and
- special emergency procedures.

Refer to the *Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Supplementary Services to Schools*, "In-School Support for Special Needs Students", and to Section G25: In-School Support for Special Needs Students, for further details.

### ***Planning and Implementation***

In providing services to a student with dependent needs, unique issues around seating, lifting, positioning, movement, feeding, medication, hygiene and safety will have to be addressed by the school-based team. Many of these can be carried out in a classroom environment, but others, for reasons of privacy and dignity, require a more secluded space. The student will also require adaptations to the learning environment to participate in aspects of school life and to maximize independence. The student should have access to as many parts of the school as possible, to increase opportunities for participation. Equipment accessibility in these areas will also have to be addressed. Adaptations to facilities or equipment to allow access to school areas and programs should be made as quickly as possible where physical barriers exist (see Sections G1: Access to School Facilities; G3: Access to Equipment; G5: Access to Technology Support; and Section H61: Appendix H for more detailed considerations). The Provincial Integration Support program can provide information and strategies to maximize participation by students with multiple disabilities.



Recent and ongoing technological advances in adaptive devices related to computer access, environmental controls and augmented communication have greatly enhanced learning opportunities for students with dependent needs. It is expected that specialist staff will stay informed about current developments and introduce new technology as appropriate. The services of the SET-BC program may be appropriate for some of these students (see Section H17: Appendix C).

A student with a degenerative and/or terminal condition who is or becomes dependent should have normal routines maintained as long as possible. Health care plans will need regular updating and will need to include emergency procedures to meet individual needs and circumstances.

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

It is expected that districts and schools will include students with dependent needs in regular evaluation and reporting. Some students with dependent needs are of average or above average intellectual ability and can meet the learning outcomes identified in the prescribed curriculum if appropriate adaptations are made to instruction and assessment methods. The method of evaluation will be consistent with the IEP and with ministry reporting policies in respect to the use of comments and/or letter grades.

Some students may require extensive modifications to parts or all of their program so that the learning outcomes will be substantially different from the regular curriculum. In these cases, evaluation will be based on the degree to which the goals and objectives in the IEP are achieved. Evaluation would be referenced to individually set standards.

Reports to parents should be provided on the same schedule used for all students. Progress should be reported with respect to all components of the program and with reference to progress in relation to the IEP goals. Reports should indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program. All personnel directly involved in the ongoing educational program (e.g., classroom teacher, specialist teacher, speech-language pathologist) should report on student progress.

Student Progress should be evaluated using a range of assessment techniques. These may include criterion-based measures, curriculum-based assessments, teacher observations, samples of student work, and the extent to which IEP goals have been achieved.

### ***Personnel***

#### **Teachers and other professionals**

The Ministry of Education expects that with sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be competent in including students with dependent needs, provided that support is available. Inservice training

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the skills required.

Teachers with responsibilities for supporting students with dependent needs should fulfill the qualifications described for learning assistance (see Section D1: Learning Assistance Services). In addition, they should have advanced coursework in:

- the characteristics and needs of students with dependent needs;
- specialized instructional methodologies and technologies; and
- adaptation and modification of programs for students with dependent needs.

There may also be a need for a qualified health professional to monitor the quality of health services on a regular basis. Protocol agreements with the Ministry of Health identify the health care of students with dependent needs. Responsibilities under these agreements are outlined in Section G25: In-School Support for Special Needs Students. Districts should ensure that staff who serve students with chronic and complex health needs are trained and qualified to perform the functions required.

### Teacher assistants

Teacher assistants who work in classrooms with students with dependent needs should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- an understanding of the social, emotional, and educational implications of dependent needs;
- functional life skills and career development; and
- technological support.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop expertise in these and related areas.

### Resources

For more information on developing an appropriate plan for the student, consult the *Handbook for Integrated Case Management* (Child and Youth Secretariat, 1993).

The Provincial Integration Support Program is an outreach service mandated to assist schools throughout British Columbia in meeting the educational needs of students with multiple/severe disabilities. This program is available to provide information, inservice and teaching strategies to

support the classroom teacher and support team to meet the educational needs of the student with multiple/severe disabilities. Further information may be obtained from:

The Co-ordinator  
Provincial Integration Support Program  
1525 Rowan Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8P 1X4  
Phone: (604) 595-2088  
Fax: (604) 592-5976



## Students with Multiple Disabilities:

### Those Who are Deafblind

#### *Definition*

A student with deafblindness has a degree of visual and auditory impairment which, when compounded, results in significant difficulties in developing communicative, educational, vocational, avocational, and social skills.

To be considered deafblind the student's vision and auditory impairments can range from partial sight to total blindness and from moderate to profound hearing loss.

Students who are identified and assessed as deafblind are eligible for supplemental funding as students with multiple disabilities when the following conditions are met:

- a current IEP must be in place;

**and**

- direct, ongoing special education service(s) must be provided. These services should be outlined in the IEP and directly related to the student's identified special need(s). The special education service(s) must be in addition to any services provided under formula funding based on total student enrolment (e.g., learning assistance, counselling). Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

#### *Identification and Assessment*

Districts should have current information that describes the sensory acuities (vision and hearing), physical development, orientation and mobility (skills and knowledge), social development, academic abilities, educational achievement, and communicative competence of students who are deafblind.

This information is best obtained for students who are deafblind through a multidisciplinary assessment process.

#### *Planning and Implementation*

The needs of students who are deafblind are varied. Therefore instruction should be adapted and the curriculum modified to reflect individual needs. Many students who are deafblind have potentially useful hearing and/or vision which enhances their potential for integration into the classroom. However, specific intervention and appropriate support should be available in order for each student to develop and learn. The student's educational requirements and any special measures that are to be taken in order to help meet those requirements must be documented in a formal Individual Education Plan.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

When an IEP is developed, the following needs should be considered:

- communication skills;
- social skills;
- orientation and mobility skills;
- visual skills;
- auditory skills;
- daily living skills;
- academic skills;
- specialized skills in reading (e.g., Braille, large print, closed captioned TV (CCTV));
- specialized skills in mathematics (e.g., abacus, Nemeth Code);
- access to technology (e.g., tape recorders, microcomputers); and
- study skills and note-taking strategies.

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

Reports of student progress should be based on the goals, strategies and outcomes outlined in the IEP. Some students who are deafblind are able to meet the objectives of the curriculum if appropriate adaptations are made to instruction and assessment methods.

Parents should receive reports on the student's progress for all aspects of the IEP as part of the school's usual reporting process.

### ***Personnel***

As the educational strategies that are effective for students with a single sensory impairment are frequently ineffective with students with the dual sensory impairment of deafblindness, school districts should ideally use the services of qualified teachers of the deafblind to meet the needs of students who are deafblind. If these personnel are not available then it is recommended that consultation services for district personnel be sought from other sources such as the Provincial Outreach Program for Deafblind Students (see below).

If the support of an intervenor or a teacher assistant is warranted, the classroom teacher should consult with specialist personnel to assist him or her in developing, directing and monitoring the assistant's or intervenor's activities. Teacher assistants or intervenors should have sufficient training and understanding of deafblindness for the duties they are assigned.

## **Resources**

### **Provincial Outreach Program for Deafblind Students**

The Provincial Outreach Program for Deafblind Students is available to provide consultative services to B.C. school districts enrolling deafblind students. Consultants work with the team of service providers to help them plan and implement a consistent program designed to meet the needs of the deafblind student in the school, the family and the community. The consultants are educational specialists in the field of deafblindness. Their experience and training has qualified them to provide support to other professionals and parents working with deafblind students.

Further information may be obtained from:

The Co-ordinator,  
Provincial Outreach Program for Deafblind Students,  
12600 Blundell Road,  
Richmond, B.C. V6W 1B3  
Phone: (604) 668-7810  
Fax: (604) 668-7812

### **Provincial School for the Deaf**

In some instances the needs of students with deafblindness cannot be met locally or regionally. This may be true when the students require an environment with other students who use sign language as their primary means of communication. The Provincial School for the Deaf in Burnaby has a program for students with deafblindness staffed by specialist teachers of the deafblind. Referrals to the Provincial School for the Deaf and other Provincial Resource Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing may be made through the Provincial Educational Review Committee for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (PERCDHH). See Section E51: Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing; Resources.

### **Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired/SET-BC**

School districts may borrow learning resources, reference materials and equipment for use with students with deafblindness from the Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI) and in some instances from Special Education Technology-British Columbia (SET-BC). See Sections H13 and H17: Appendix C.

### **Auditory Training Equipment (ATE)**

School boards are responsible for referring students who have a hearing loss to the Ministry of Health for a needs assessment to determine whether auditory training equipment for classroom use is required. The Ministry of Education makes auditory training equipment available to school districts for the use of deaf and hard of hearing students in public and independent schools and provides for routine maintenance. Procedures for obtaining auditory training equipment are outlined in Section H11: Appendix C.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING****Specialized equipment grants**

Targeted funds are provided on an annual basis for students who are deafblind to assist school boards in providing the specialized equipment required by these students. See Section H1 I: Appendix C.

When considering the purchase of specialized equipment school districts should be aware that the fitting of hearing prostheses, or any fitting related activities, may come under the jurisdiction of the Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants, and may involve liability for the school district and/or individuals operating under its mandate.

**Protocol to support pre-school children**

A protocol has been established in recognition of the unique needs of young children who are deafblind who require the specialized skills of teachers of the deafblind. This protocol allows for boards to contract the services of teachers of the deafblind, visually impaired and/or deaf and hard of hearing to local agencies, preschools or parents.



## Students with Physical Disabilities or Chronic Health Impairments

### *Definition*

A student is considered to have a physical disability or chronic health impairment based on the need for special educational services due to one or more of the following:

- nervous system impairment;
- musculoskeletal condition; and/or
- chronic health impairment.

Medical diagnosis, by itself, does not determine the special educational services required by students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments. Students are only eligible for funding in this category if their education is adversely affected by their physical disabilities or chronic health impairments.

To be eligible for supplemental funding for a student in this category, the following conditions must be met:

- the student must meet one or more of the above criteria;

**and**

- a current IEP must be in place;

**and**

- direct, ongoing special education service(s) must be provided. These services should be outlined in the IEP and directly related to the student's identified special need(s). The special education service(s) must be in addition to any services provided under formula funding based on total student enrolment (e.g., learning assistance, counselling). Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

### *Identification and Assessment*

Assessments should integrate current, relevant information related to the student's intellectual, social/emotional, sensory, physical and communicative abilities as well as his or her ability to perform activities of daily living at school. Individual Education Plans should take into account specific health care and personal care needs, and outline specific strategies to address those needs. An extended school-based team would typically include medical professionals and consultation with parents in order to develop and implement an effective IEP.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

***Planning and Implementation***

Medical diagnosis, by itself, does not determine the special educational services required by a student with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments. It is the extent and impact of the physical/medical condition, and the consequent need for services which enable the student to access an educational program and participate in a meaningful way, that are the determinants.

For some students, increasing dependence is expected due to degenerative conditions or terminal illnesses. It is important that these students be encouraged to maintain normal routines as long as possible. At the same time, it is essential that the educational system affirm the rights of students and families to participate meaningfully in the individualization of the student's educational program. Health care plans will need regular updating and will need to include emergency procedures to meet individual needs and circumstances.

Students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments should have opportunities to participate in school activities to the greatest extent possible. Adaptations to facilities or equipment to allow access to school areas and programs should be made as quickly as possible where physical barriers exist. Refer to Sections G1: Access to School Facilities; G3: Access to Equipment; G5: Access to Technology Support; and Section H61: Appendix H for more detailed considerations.

In all situations where there is contact with body fluids, personnel are advised to follow the "Universal Precautions" (see Section H23: Appendix E), and to contact the medical health officer as laid out in the *School Act* (section 9(4)) where there is a concern about safety of others.

***Evaluation and Reporting***

In most cases, students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments will take part in the regular program with the necessary adaptations. Evaluation will be based on the regular standards (i.e., extent to which learning outcomes were achieved). The method of evaluation will be consistent with the IEP and with ministry reporting policies in respect to the use of comments and/or letter grades.

Some students may require extensive modifications to parts of their program so that some of their learning outcomes will be substantially different from the regular curriculum. In these cases, evaluation will be based on the degree to which the individualized outcomes are achieved. Evaluation would be referenced to individually set standards.

Reports to parents should be provided on the same schedule used for all students. Progress should be reported with respect to all components of the

program, and with reference to progress in relation to IEP goals. Reports should indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program. All personnel directly involved in the ongoing educational program (e.g., classroom teacher, specialist teacher, speech-language pathologist) should report on student progress.

## **Personnel**

### **Teachers and other professionals**

The Ministry of Education expects that with sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be capable of including most students with physical disabilities and chronic health impairments and providing a program in which they can be successful, provided that specialist support is available when needed. Inservice training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the skills required.

Teachers with responsibilities for supporting students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments should fulfill the qualifications described for learning assistance (see Section D1: Learning Assistance Services). In addition, they should have advanced coursework in:

- the characteristics and needs of students with physical disabilities and chronic health impairments; and
- specialized instructional methodologies and technologies; and adaptation or modification of programs for students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments.

There also may be a need for a qualified health professional to monitor the quality of the health services. Protocol agreements with the Ministry of Health identify the needs of these students as falling into three levels. Responsibilities under these agreements are outlined in Section G25: In-School Support for Special Needs Students. Whenever there is any doubt as to who should provide health care in the school setting, the district staff and the school principal shall consult with the parents, the local health unit or the attending physician. Districts should ensure that staff who serve students with chronic and complex health needs are trained and qualified to perform the functions required.

Recent and ongoing technological advances in adaptive devices related to computer access, environmental controls, and augmented communication have greatly enhanced learning opportunities for students with physical disabilities. Staff will need to stay informed of current developments and introduce new technology as appropriate. The service of SET-BC may be appropriate for some of these students (see Section H17: Appendix C).

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

**Teacher assistants**

Teacher assistants who work in classrooms with students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- an understanding of the social, emotional, and educational implications of dependent needs;
- functional life skills and career development; and
- technological support.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop expertise in these and related areas.

## Students with Visual Impairment

### Definition

Visual impairment is a generic term which covers a range of difficulties with vision and includes the following categories: blind, legally blind, partially sighted, low vision, and cortically visually impaired.

For educational purposes, a student with visual impairment is one whose visual acuity is not sufficient for the student to participate with ease in everyday activities. The impairment interferes with optimal learning and achievement and can result in a substantial educational disadvantage, unless adaptations are made in the methods of presenting learning opportunities, the nature of the materials used and/or the learning environment. It is *not intended to include students described as having visual perceptual difficulties* unless they also have a vision loss as described below.

For information pertaining to students who are deafblind, see Section E37: Students with Multiple Disabilities: Those Who are Deafblind.

To be eligible for supplemental funding as a visually impaired student, the following three conditions must be met:

- in the opinion of an ophthalmologist, optometrist, orthoptist or the Visually Impaired Program at British Columbia's Children's Hospital, the student's functioning may be described by one of the following:
  - ✓ a visual acuity of 6/21 (20/70) or less in the better eye after correction;
  - ✓ a visual field of 20 degrees or less;
  - ✓ any progressive eye disease with a prognosis of becoming one of the above in the next few years; or
  - ✓ a visual problem or related visual stamina that is not correctable and that results in the student functioning as if his or her visual acuity is limited to 6/21 (20/70) or less;

**and**

- a current IEP must be in place;

**and**

- The student must be receiving additional special education services that are directly related to the student's visual impairment on a regular and frequent basis from a qualified teacher of the visually impaired. The special education service(s) must be in addition to any services provided under formula funding based on total student enrolment (e.g., learning assistance, counselling). Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

### ***Identification and Assessment***

School districts should co-operate with Ministry of Health personnel to ensure all students participate in a vision screening program for the identification and prevention of visual impairments. Schools should also request a vision and hearing screening whenever they suspect a student is experiencing difficulties or is having trouble learning. These programs should be conducted by local health personnel in accordance with the Inter-ministerial protocol, "Generalized School Health Services".

The school district should develop and implement referral procedures to ensure that every visually impaired student is identified, and receives an appropriate educational program.

In order to plan the educational program the teacher of the visually impaired should conduct a functional vision assessment to identify the educational implications of the student's vision loss. In the case of students with a severe visual impairment, a qualified orientation and mobility instructor should also assess the students' skills in orientation and mobility.

### ***Planning and Implementation***

A component essential to the establishment of an effective system of delivery of services to students with visual impairment is the availability of qualified, experienced teachers who have regular classroom experience and in addition are competent to adapt materials, teach Braille, use visual aids and technological devices and plan, develop, deliver, and monitor all aspects of schooling affected by visual impairment.

With appropriate support services, many students can follow the curriculum with adaptation of learning resources or instructional methods. When necessary, however, the curriculum should be modified to reflect individual needs. The student's educational requirements and any special measures that are to be taken in order to help meet those requirements should be documented in a formal Individual Education Plan.

When an IEP is developed, the following needs should be considered:

- orientation and mobility skills;
- visual skills;
- specialized skills in reading (e.g., Braille, taped books, enhanced print, CCTV);
- specialized skills in mathematics (e.g., abacus, Nemeth Code);
- access to technology (e.g., Braille 'n Speak, tape recorders, computers);
- daily living skills;
- social skills;
- vocational planning and skill development;

- study skills and note-taking strategies; and
- concept development.

Orientation and mobility (O&M) is an essential component of the curriculum for students with severe visual impairments. It provides students with the skills necessary to know where they are in the school or community, where they want to go and how to get there in a safe and efficient manner with as much independence as possible. Orientation and mobility training should not be restricted to the school environment but should include other environments in which the student is required to function at different times of the day.

At the secondary level, school districts may develop and approve orientation and mobility programs or Braille programs for visually impaired students as locally developed or independent study courses for credit toward graduation.

Most students with visual impairment require specialized equipment (e.g., Braille, closed-circuit televisions, cassette recorders, optical aids) and adapted learning resources (e.g., Braille texts, enlarged print books, tapes). These tend to be very bulky. Schools should ensure there is adequate, accessible storage available to the student.

A working or instructional area for instruction in specific skill development by the itinerant or resource teacher should also be provided. This instructional area should be conducive to effective instruction (i.e., in compliance with health and safety codes, quiet, adequately lit, ventilated and free from distractions).

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

The student's IEP should outline the specific strategies which will be used to evaluate the student's progress. Parents should receive reports on the student's progress for all aspects of the IEP as part of the school's usual reporting process.

Due to factors such as visual fatigue, slow reading and writing speed, and the visual components of evaluation tools such as video or maps the student may require adaptations to the usual classroom testing situation. Such adaptations could involve additional time, the use of a reader or scribe, the use of specialized equipment, reduction in the volume of work to be completed while retaining the same learning outcomes, the provision of a description of the visual components, such as a video, and the use of an alternate setting for completing the work. These adaptations should be documented in the student's IEP and monitored for their appropriateness and effectiveness.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

For students writing provincial examinations, Braille, large print, computer disk and audio tape copies of the examinations can be provided if applied for well in advance. See Section G7: Adjudication: Provincial and Scholarship Examinations for more information on procedures for adapting provincial examinations to accommodate students with visual impairment.

**Personnel****Teacher of the visually impaired**

Where supplemental funding is requested by districts for students with visual impairments, teachers must have appropriate qualifications. The ministry defines a qualified teacher of the visually impaired as one with:

- a valid B.C. Teaching Certificate, and
- a Master's degree or diploma in the education of the visually impaired.

Where a district is unable to employ a teacher of the visually impaired, this requirement may be met by providing regular services through sharing arrangements with other districts or through a fee-for-service arrangement with qualified specialist teachers of the visually impaired.

**Orientation and mobility instructor**

To ensure that students have access to appropriate orientation and mobility services, school districts should obtain services from qualified orientation and mobility instructors. The ministry defines a qualified orientation and mobility instructor as one who:

- meets standards established by the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER); **or**
- has a Master's degree in orientation and mobility; **or**
- has completed post-graduate studies in orientation and mobility which include at least 300 hours of supervised practice in orientation and mobility working with individuals with a variety of visual impairments.

They should have a solid foundation and expertise in the areas of education of students with visual impairment and child growth and development. They should also demonstrate skills in human relations and communication.

Many teachers of the visually impaired have taken additional training and are also qualified as orientation and mobility instructors. In other cases, school districts may find it necessary to contract for specialized orientation and mobility instructors to provide this training.

**Teacher assistants**

If the support of a teacher assistant is warranted the teacher of the visually impaired should consult with the classroom teacher to assist him or her in developing, directing, and monitoring the assistant's activities. Teacher



assistants should have sufficient training and understanding of visual impairments for the duties they are assigned, and be able to demonstrate an understanding of the social, emotional and educational implications of vision loss.

Teacher assistants working with Braille-using students should either have, or be working in a timely manner toward completion of, a Braille transcribing course (see Section H21: Appendix D).

### **Braillists**

Districts enrolling Braille-using students will need to obtain Braille transcription services for tests, examinations and teacher-made materials. These transcription services can be provided by a staff Braillist or they can be contracted to a Braillist or the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB).

If the district does not have a qualified Braillist it may apply to have personnel trained through the Braille correspondence course (see Section H21: Appendix D).

### **Resources**

#### **Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired - SET-BC.**

School districts may borrow learning resources, reference materials and equipment for the use of students with visual impairments from the Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI) and Special Education Technology-British Columbia (SET-BC) (See Sections H13 and H17: Appendix C).

#### **Specialized equipment grants**

Targeted funds are provided on an annual basis for students who are visually impaired to assist school boards in providing the specialized equipment required by these students (see Section H11: Appendix C).

#### **Protocol to support pre-school children**

A protocol has been established in recognition of the unique needs of young children who are visually impaired and who require the specialized skills of teachers of the visually impaired. This protocol allows for boards to contract the services of teachers of the visually impaired to local agencies, preschools and parents.



## Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

### *Definition*

For educational purposes a student considered to be deaf or hard of hearing is one who has a medically diagnosed hearing loss which results in such a substantial educational difficulty that he/she requires direct services on a regular, frequent and ongoing basis by a qualified teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Students with a diagnosis of central auditory processing dysfunction are not traditionally served by teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing unless there is an additional diagnosis of peripheral hearing loss.

For information pertaining to students who are deafblind, see Section E37: Students with Multiple Disabilities: Those Who are Deafblind.

To be eligible for supplemental funding as a deaf or hard of hearing student the following conditions must be met:

- a medical diagnosis of hearing loss has been made;
- and**
- a current IEP must be in place;
- and**
- the student must be receiving special education services that are directly related to the student's hearing loss on a regular, frequent and on-going basis from a qualified teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing. The special education service(s) must be in addition to any services provided under formula funding based on total student enrolment (e.g., learning assistance, counselling). Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

### *Identification and Assessment*

Most children with significant hearing loss will have been identified through an audiological assessment prior to entering the school system. A few children, however, particularly those with less severe hearing loss, may not have been identified prior to school entry. Under the audiological services protocol agreement between the Ministries of Health and Education, all students in the initial school entry year receive a hearing screening. Any student who fails the screening should be referred to the nearest health unit or audiology clinic for a complete hearing assessment. Indeed, any student referred for special education services during his or her school career should be referred for a hearing assessment in order to determine whether an intermittent or chronic hearing loss is the primary cause of any exhibited learning or behavioural problem.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

Hearing loss is generally measured in terms of decibel loss using standards agreed on internationally. However, decibel losses do not always correlate with educational implications and are therefore not a sole criterion for determination of need for educational intervention. Any degree of hearing loss has educational implications, so following the identification of a student's hearing loss an assessment to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the student in the areas of language development and communication skills may be required. This assessment, usually administered by a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, may include the administration of standardized tests in the areas of ability and achievement, as well as curriculum-based assessment and observation and teacher reports. Program planning decisions and recommendations for placement of the student in a specific program should occur only once a full assessment has been completed.

A critical part of the assessment process is determining the method of communication to be used in the educational setting. While the majority of students who are hard of hearing will develop English language skills through the use of appropriate amplification and oral instruction, some students, often with more severe hearing losses, will require either an English-based sign system or American Sign Language. School districts are responsible for assessing the most enabling language(s) to allow a student who is deaf or hard of hearing to fully access the curriculum, and for providing staff with the qualifications to meet the specific communication needs of individual students.

### ***Planning and Implementation***

The educational program for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing should not be confined to the regular program but should also include specific instruction in:

- language development;
- auditory management;
- speech development;
- speech reading;
- sign language as required; and
- deaf culture when appropriate.

In addition to addressing the direct effects of hearing loss and language development, the IEP should address the social and vocational needs which arise as a result of the hearing loss and which are known to be significant.

Most students who are deaf or hard of hearing can and should be educated in their local school district. Typically, programming for students with hearing loss involves one or more of the following services:

- a regular class with direct, frequent support from a qualified itinerant teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing;
- a resource room staffed by a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing;
- a self-contained class staffed by a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing who has access to the appropriate support services; and/or
- an individual program for students with hearing loss and additional special needs.

The prevalence of hearing loss is low. Therefore, the provision of a full range of services within a single school district is not always feasible. In such cases, school districts are encouraged to collaborate to provide regional programs that serve the needs of students in several districts. In particular, the social and emotional needs of adolescent students who are deaf or hard of hearing may require more than itinerant services. Where there are a sufficient number of students, local or regional school programs for the deaf and hard of hearing should be developed to launch a flexible and comprehensive program complete with qualified staff and the appropriate support services.

When the needs of a particular deaf or hard of hearing student cannot be met locally or regionally, or where special circumstances prevail, the student may be referred to the Provincial Educational Review Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students for recommendations for programming and/or determination of eligibility for Provincial Resource Programs designed for students with hearing loss.

### ***Evaluation and Reporting***

School districts are responsible for developing clearly defined policies and procedures which include a mechanism for:

- assessing the effectiveness of local programs for deaf and hard of hearing students;
- monitoring the educational program of a student placed in a regional or provincial setting to ensure continued appropriateness; and
- evaluating student progress specific to the additional service provided by a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing. Such evaluation may result in adjustment of communication methodology, recommendations for either additional or reduced service, recommendation for alternate placement, etc.

It is expected that students who are deaf or hard of hearing will follow the regular evaluation and reporting procedures of the district. Specific comments regarding progress in the areas of language development and communication skill, as well as other areas identified on the IEP, should be included in the report.

## **Personnel**

### **Teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing**

Where supplemental funding is requested by districts, teachers must have appropriate qualifications. The ministry defines a qualified teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing as one with:

- a valid B.C. Teaching Certificate; and
- certification, or eligibility for certification, by the Association of Canadian Educators of the Hearing Impaired (ACEHI).

Where a district is unable to employ a qualified teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, this requirement may be met by providing services through sharing arrangements with adjacent districts or through a fee-for-service arrangement with qualified specialist teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

### **Visual language interpreters**

A visual language interpreter, often referred to as an interpreter or sign language interpreter, should meet standards established by:

- the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf, Inc. (R.I.D), or
- the Association of Visual Language Instructors of Canada (AVLIC);

or be a graduate of the Douglas College Visual Language Interpreter Training Program or an equivalent program from another institution.

### **Teacher assistants**

If the support of a teacher assistant is warranted, the teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing should consult with the classroom teacher to assist in developing, directing, and monitoring the assistant's activities. Teacher assistants working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing should have sufficient training and understanding of hearing loss for the duties they are assigned. Teacher assistants should be able to demonstrate:

- an understanding of the social, emotional and educational implications of hearing loss; and
- competence in the communication mode of the student(s).

Where the role of the teacher assistant is to facilitate communication between the student and others in the environment the district should ensure the teacher assistant can demonstrate proficiency in the communication mode of the student. In instances where sign communication and/or oral interpretation is required and the individual is not a qualified interpreter, districts are advised to arrange for qualified interpreters to evaluate the communication competency of the teacher assistant.

## Resources

### Provincial Education Review Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

The Provincial Education Review Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (PERCDHH) is a ministry-appointed body which may, upon the request of a district:

- advise a district regarding the educational needs of a student who is deaf or hard of hearing;
- determine eligibility for admission to any of the Provincial Resource Programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students; and
- recommend to the school district a specific Provincial Resource Program that best meets the educational needs of the student.

Referrals may be made to:

The Secretariat,  
Provincial School for the Deaf,  
5455 Rumble Street  
Burnaby, B.C. V5J 2B7

Phone: (604) 664-8560  
TTY: (604) 664-8563  
Fax: (604) 664-8561

### Auditory Training Equipment

School boards are responsible for referring students who have a hearing loss to the Ministry of Health for a needs assessment to determine whether auditory training equipment for classroom use is required (Ministerial Order 149/89, the Support Services for Schools Order). The Ministry of Education makes auditory training equipment (ATE) available to districts for the use of deaf and hard of hearing students in the public schools of British Columbia, and provides for routine maintenance. Procedures for obtaining auditory training equipment are outlined in Section H11: Appendix C.

### Jericho Outreach Program

The Jericho Outreach Program for deaf and hard of hearing students is available to provide consultative and support services to school districts.

Further information may be obtained from:

Outreach Consultant  
Provincial School for the Deaf  
Jericho Outreach Program  
5455 Rumble Street  
Burnaby, B.C. V5J 2B7

Phone: (604) 664-8560  
Fax: (604) 664-8561  
TTY: (604) 664-8563

### **Resource centre**

A Resource Centre for deaf, hard of hearing and speech materials has been established as part of the outreach program of the Provincial School for the Deaf to permit teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing and other district personnel to review recent professional publications, assessment tools and media materials.

### **Specialized equipment grants**

Targeted funds are provided on an annual basis for students who are deaf and hard of hearing to assist boards in providing the specialized equipment required by these students. See section H11: Appendix C: Auditory Training Equipment (ATE).

When considering the purchase of specialized equipment, school districts should be aware that the fitting of hearing prostheses, or any fitting related activities, may come under the jurisdiction of the Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants, and may involve liability for the school district and/or individuals operating under its mandate.

### **Funding for cochlear implant recipients**

When a child has had a cochlear implant, he or she requires (re)habilitation over and above the services normally provided to deaf and hard of hearing students. A special grant is available on application from the Ministry of Education to provide such specialized support. Applications should be made to the Special Education Branch. Funds are available for a maximum of three consecutive years, following date of implant.

### **Protocol to support pre-school children**

A protocol has been established in recognition of the unique needs of young children who are deaf and who require the specialized skills of teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. This protocol allows for boards to contract the services of teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing to local agencies, preschools or parents.



## Students with Autism

### *Definition*

The syndrome of autism is a condition characterized by a marked disorder of communication and a severe disturbance of intellectual, emotional and behavioural development. It is a syndrome defined and diagnosed through the observation of behaviours. The syndrome is caused by an underlying physical dysfunction within the brain or central nervous system, the exact nature of which is as yet unknown. The Ministry of Education uses the definition of autism as defined by the American Psychiatric Association.

Based on this definition, a student with autism exhibits impairment in:

- reciprocal social interaction;
- verbal and nonverbal communication;
- imaginative activity; and
- restrictive, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interest and activities.

To be eligible for supplemental funding, the following conditions must be met:

- a diagnosis of autism must have been made by appropriately qualified professionals;

**and**

- a current IEP must be in place;

**and**

- the student must be receiving additional special education services directly related to the autism on an ongoing and frequent basis.

Reduction in class size is not by itself sufficient to meet the definition.

### *Identification and Assessment*

For purposes of identification and assessment of a student for a diagnosis of autism, appropriately qualified professionals include the developmental/assessment team at Sunny Hill Hospital for Children, or B.C. Children's Hospital, or Queen Alexandra Hospital, or a pediatrician/psychiatrist or a registered psychologist.

Students who present with any of the cluster of disabilities referred to as "pervasive developmental disorders" should not be identified in the autism funding category, but should be assigned to the category that best reflects the nature of their disabling conditions and the type and intensity of interventions required. These should be based on the assessment required in the category in which they are reported.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PLANNING**

A student identified as having autism and in need of a special program should be assessed in order to identify areas of both strength and need, and to plan appropriate educational programs based on that information. The assessment should integrate information related to vision and hearing (sensory acuity), physical development, social adjustment, communicative competence, academic abilities and educational achievement. Districts are encouraged to use school-based teams as the vehicle for initiating and monitoring all assessment and program planning activities.

***Planning and Implementation***

Each student's educational program should be identified in a timely manner in a current IEP that addresses the goals set out in the planning process. Taking individual needs into account, program objectives should include the improvement of:

- socially adaptive behaviours and social responsiveness;
- motor development;
- communicative competence; and
- academic performance.

Many children with autism receive services from other ministries. Personnel should work co-operatively with other agency staff. An improvement in a student's adaptive behaviour and skills should result in a greater range of functional skills directed at community living. To assist in this improvement, efforts should be made to co-ordinate school programs with other community activities. This functional skill development should be reflected in a student's IEP.

Career exploration, job skills training and work experience should be an integral part of the secondary school experience for students with autism.

Procedures and timelines for reviewing intended instructional outcomes should be clearly noted in each student's IEP.

***Evaluation and Reporting***

It is expected that districts and schools will include students with autism in regular evaluation and reporting. Reports of student progress should be based on the goals, strategies, and outcomes outlined in the IEP. Since extensive program modifications are usually required, evaluation should be based on the degree to which the individual learning outcomes are achieved (see Section H37: Appendix F). IEPs should identify any adaptation of student assessment procedures that are required to provide a fair appraisal of the knowledge and skills a student with autism has acquired.

Reviews of student progress should involve the student, if appropriate, and the parents or guardians. They should determine whether the pre-established goals are being attained, and should identify any adjustments to the instructional program which are required.

## **Personnel**

### **Specialist staff**

Teachers working with students with autism should have or acquire skills and training in behaviour management, communication, motor development and the development of social skills. As well, teachers should display those skills necessary to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate functional and realistic individual programs. Teachers should also have competence in establishing transdisciplinary teams and in supervising/co-ordinating the work of classroom assistants and other relevant personnel.

The need for specialist support personnel for students with autism varies, depending on the student's situation. Where district support services are required, such as psychoeducational assessment/intervention or speech-language pathology, students with autism should be granted equitable access to this assistance.

### **Teacher assistants**

Teacher Assistants who work in classrooms with students with autism should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- shaping appropriate behaviour;
- stimulating communication;
- developing skills for independent living; and
- facilitating peer interaction and relationships.

It should be noted that teacher assistants work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer. Inservice training should include opportunities to further develop key skills.

## **Resources**

Gateway Provincial Resource Programs are provided for students with autism.

Gateway House is a residential resource operated by the Ministry of Social Services. The school program is funded by the Ministry of Education and administered by School District No. 37 (Delta). Educational services are provided during the regular school year and for six weeks of summer school. Students are placed in Gateway House by the Ministry of Social Services.

The Gateway outreach program is available to provide assessment and consulting services to school district personnel.

Gateway Provincial Resource Program  
4812 Georgia Street  
Delta, B.C. V4K 2S9  
Phone: (604) 946-3610  
Fax: (604) 946-2956