

# INCLUSIVE education

© The Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education

- **SUPPORT**

*for students to learn ... better ... together*

*for teachers to teach students of all abilities*

- welcoming, accommodating and celebrating ALL individual differences - as enrichments
- the highest, individualized academic and social learning goals
- mutual respect – because everyone can learn
- giving credit for all learning and all teaching
- active and co-operative learning - planned with everyone in mind
- merging “special” and “regular” education and sharing resources

- **MEMBERSHIP in a regular class**

- with kids of the same age
- students must belong, in order to learn
- this means the classroom teacher is committed to each student’s success
- learning takes place in a variety of settings
- support comes to the whole class

- going to your own “natural” **NEIGHBOURHOOD school**

- with brothers and sisters
- with other kids who live near you

- support to participate in and contribute to the life of the school

- school culture encourages a strong collaborative COMMUNITY among students, parents, teachers and staff

- school restructuring requires LEADERSHIP and advocacy together for the required supports

*Isn't this the better education we want - for ALL students?*



## *The Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education*

### **PROGRAM versus PLACEMENT**

The Education Act defines “special education program” as:

- “in respect of **AN exceptional PUPIL**” (not a group)
- “based on and modified by continuous assessment and evaluation” - of how that student learns
- “containing specific objectives” - for that student
- “containing an outline of educational services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil”

**Program** is designed for one student at a time, not groups.

This means support should come to students right where they belong

– in regular classrooms in their own neighbourhood schools.

Segregation can be avoided when students get the help they need to learn, and teachers get the help they need to teach the students of all abilities who have a right to attend regular classrooms.

In September 1998, the **Education Act Regulation 181** became law in Ontario. There were some important changes, but even now they are not being enforced.

- **IPRC** means Identification Placement Review Committee
- “I” means **Identification** – classifying a student as “exceptional” and assigning him or her one of the Ministry of Education’s 12 exceptionality “labels”.
- “P” means **Placement**
- Section 17 states that IPRCs must consider whether placement in a **regular class** would meet the student’s needs and be consistent with parental preferences. So it is very important to have clear understanding about student needs. And parents need help to make a fair and informed choice. But the law does not require school boards to have segregated classes.
- Section 18 c states that reasons must be given whenever an IPRC decides to put a student in a **segregated class** (or school).
- IPRC decisions can be appealed by parents and by older students.
- There has been much debate as to whether discussion about “program” is relevant in IPRC and appeal processes.
- The Ministry defines **5 types of “placements”** – the wording of which actually does **involve distinctions about “program”** (see page D10 of the Ministry’s Special Education: A Guide for Educators):
  1. regular class with indirect support
  2. regular class with resource assistance
  3. regular class with withdrawal assistance
  4. special education class with partial integration
  5. special education class full time

# What should "Program" mean?

*Draft statement - The Coalition for Inclusive Education - February 2000*

Inclusive education means that students can receive *a range of supports* to learn as members of regular classrooms in their neighbourhood schools.

*Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* are very important.

They are the best way to bring help to the student, as well as the teacher.

They are now required by law, in Ontario (Regulation 181).

The Ministry of Education plans to make IEPs work better for students.

People who talk about *a range of placements* believe that some students should be segregated.

Sometimes school officials say that a student needs a "special" *program*. What they usually mean is that he or she should go away from the neighbourhood school to get help - usually into a segregated class or school, such as a communication or life skills class, or a provincial school for the blind. Program might also involve certain kinds of professional help, available usually to groups of students - like speech therapy.

School boards usually speak about program as a way they organize their special education resources for groups of students.

Often this really means "placement".

The Education Act says "*special education program*" means:

- a plan for an individual student
- modified by and based on how that student learns
- setting out the goals for that student
- outlining the help that student needs.

*So program should mean IEP; it should be about one student at a time.*

We are concerned because the Ministry of Education seems to be using the word "program" in a different way. They want to develop "*program standards for each exceptionality*". They say this could help students get the same kind of help when they move from one school to another.

This seems to mean that they think there are ways to treat all students who have the same label the same way. This is really against the law now.

Instead, we think the Ministry should make sure schools work with students and their parents just on better IEPs - to get exactly the help each student needs to learn in regular classrooms, without being segregated.

Plans like this would help students when they move to high school or around Ontario. They would become *Transition Plans*, changing as students get older - making sure all students - as individuals - get better opportunities for more education or employment when they leave school.