

Alternative Programs and the IEP

From a parent perspective what does it mean when a child is on an alternative program or in an alternative course? The first thing to recognize is that the alternative program is individualized for your child, and that the goals and learning expectations are outside of the Ontario curriculum. For many students the alternative program is an additional activity to work on specific skills or knowledge. For example, students using assistive technology or Braille need to learn to use the equipment and become proficient in order to use the technology for learning. Similarly, a student, who has behaviour problems, may need to learn to control their emotions and reactions, in order to be able to learn effectively.

For other students the alternative program or alternative course is their learning program reflecting their learning needs and individual goals. For example, a student with a developmental disability may be working on skills for self care and preparation for living in the community. In a secondary alternative or "K" course they may be learning to prepare simple meals or to take the bus to the community pool. It is important to know that "K" course are non-credit courses and do not count towards graduation requirements.

The Ministry of Education document the [***Individual Education Plan \(IEP\) A Resource Guide \(2004\)***](#) includes information about alternative programs on pages 27 to 43, ***Develop the IEP as it relates to the Student's Special Education Program and Services.***

"Alternative expectations are developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum. Because they are not part of a subject or course outlined in the provincial curriculum documents,

alternative expectations are considered to constitute alternative programs or alternative courses (secondary school courses).

Examples of alternative programs include: speech remediation, social skills, orientation/mobility training, and personal care programs. For the vast majority of students, these programs would be given in addition to modified or grade level expectations from the Ontario curriculum. Alternative programs are provided at both the elementary and secondary school panels.

Alternative courses, at the secondary school level, are non-credit courses. The course expectations in an alternative course are individualized for the student, and generally focus on preparing the student for daily living. School boards must use the “K” course codes and titles found in the Ministry’s [Common Course Code](#) listings to identify alternative courses. Examples of alternative courses include Transit Training and Community Exploration (KCC), Culinary Skills (KHI) and Money Management and Personal Banking (KBB).

Alternative (ALT) is the term used to identify alternative programs and alternative courses on the IEP form.”

How is the Alternative Program or Course documented in the Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

When a student is working on an alternative program or alternative course it should be documented as a Special Education Program in the IEP. The Special Education Program (Alternative Program) should include:

- **Current level of achievement** – from the June report card or a description of current abilities
- **Annual program goal** – description of what the student can be expected to achieve in one school year. Should be an observable, measurable outcome.
- **Learning expectations** – indicates the knowledge and/or

skills the student is expected to demonstrate and have assessed by the end of reporting period (term or semester)

- **Teaching strategy** – a teaching strategy that relates to the particular learning expectations, and differs from the strategies used with other students
- **Assessment method** – assessment method that will be used to assess the achievement of the learning expectation

In the Ministry of Education IEP sample for a student with a physical disability ([E-Physical\[1\]](#)) there are three examples of Alternative Programs, for self regulation, fine motor skills and gross motor skills. In these examples, for an imaginary student, information has been provided on each aspect of the program, including the annual goal and the learning expectations for the current semester Details are provided on the teaching strategies and assessment methods that will be used to help the student learn and measure what he has achieved.

For more information on the IEP, check the other articles in the blog section on [Individual Education Plans](#), including articles on [Accommodations](#) and [Modifications](#).

Source:



The Individual Education Plan (IEP) – Special Education

Some of the information in this article is from the **Individual Education Plan (IEP) A Resource Guide (2004)** and additional

information about alternative programs can be found on pages 27 to 43, *Develop the IEP as it relates to the Student's Special Education Program and Services.*