

Identifying Potential and Programming Effectively

Joe Trovato

Psychoeducational Consultant

ErinoakKids, Centre for Treatment and Development

jtrovato@erinoakkids.ca

Easter Seals Conference

Keys to Special Education:

Advocacy, Collaboration and Knowledge

The Country Day School

King, Ontario

April 9, 2016

What Does Easter Seals Do?

- **Easter Seals Ontario provides programs and services to children and youth with physical disabilities across Ontario to help them achieve greater independence, accessibility and integration.**

What Can My School/School Board Do?

- **Provide programs and services to children and youth with physical disabilities to help them achieve greater independence, accessibility and full inclusion.**

How?

- **By helping to ensure through all available resources, optimum accessibility to the individual's physical, learning, and social environments both receptively and expressively so as to help actualize their full and true potential**

What Available Resources?

- **Community Partners**
- **School Health Support Services**
- **The Psychoeducational Assessment Process**
- **The IEP Process**
- **The IPRC Process**

Community Partners

- **Other parents and youth with physical disabilities**
- **Easter Seals Ontario**
- **Children's Treatments Centers**
- **District School Board Resources**
- **Special Education Advisory Committee, i.e., Easter Seals Ontario Rep**
- **Disability Specific Agencies, e.g., Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy**

How Do I Start the Conversation?

Create a Portfolio with Key Working Information :

- Critical background information that will increase understanding**
- Challenges that need to be positively managed in the best interest of the student**
- Documentation of strengths**
- Supportive strategies that have been known to work**
- Relevant assessment information**
- Your vision of what the education environment would best look like for your child**

School Health Support Services

- School Health Support Services include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy and other supports such as Nursing
- School Health Support Services details are available at: www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/81.html
- Coming soon this Spring will be the impact of the Special Needs Strategy on the delivery of rehabilitation services at home and at school
- Special Needs Strategy details are available at: www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/specialneeds/strategy

What About a Psychoeducational Assessment?

- **Concerns about a student's educational progress are noted by teacher or parent**
- **A referral is made to an in-school team**
- **Different teaching methods, intervention strategies are suggested and can be incorporated into an Individual Education Plan (IEP)**
- **Effectiveness of the interventions and student progress is closely monitored in the IEP**
- **Depending on progress, a referral may be made for a psychoeducational assessment in preparation for potential Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)**

What is a Psychoeducational Assessment?

- Typically conducted for the purpose of determining an individual's diagnostic status, developmental trajectory, whether typical or atypical;
- Notes strengths and challenges in areas of learning, academic achievement, and overall functioning;
- Areas of difficulty which may affect learning and the overall developmental trajectory can be diagnosed;
- The assessment provides recommendations for interventions that will affect the developmental trajectory beyond the assessment in a positive way

Assessment Components

- **Establishing the potential for learning**
- **Investigating any developmental barriers, including social-emotional impediments**
- **Establishing an actualized level of achievement**
- **Establishing an actualized overall level of day-to-day functioning**

Why the Psychoeducational Input?

- **The overall goal of the psychoeducational input is to assist educational personnel, with the support and involvement of parents, to construct and provide the special education programs and services that are required to effectively and efficiently meet individual student needs to help them achieve greater independence, accessibility and integration to their full and true potential.**

Programs?

- Refers to an *educational program* that is based on and modified by results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and that
- Includes a *plan* called an *Individual Education Plan (IEP)* that identifies the specific special education program objectives and the special education services that will meet the needs of the student
- It is the Ministry of Education's expectation that the IEP will be developed in meaningful consultation with parents.

Services?

- Refers to the *facilities* and *resources*, including *support personnel* and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing the special education program.

What Does The IPRC Do?

- **The IPRC:**
 - will decide whether a student is identified ‘exceptional’, and if so, in what category
 - determines what special education placement is appropriate
 - reviews the identification and placement at least once in each school year
- **When deciding, the IPRC considers:**
 - The student’s school and educational history
 - Health and/or psychological/psychoeducational assessment.

Identification: Exceptional?

If the Determination of Status is Exceptional, then the Identification will fall under one of the five categories of exceptionalities (as defined by the Ministry of Education)

- **Communication (Learning Disability; Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Language Impairment; Speech Impairment; Autism)**
- **Intellectual (Developmental Disability; Mild Intellectual Disability; Gifted)**
- **Behavioural**
- **Physical (Orthopedic; Blind and Low Vision)**
- **Multiple (Two or more stand alone exceptionalities)**

Range of Placements: Regular Class As Home Base

- ***A regular class with indirect support*** where the student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
- ***A regular class with resource assistance*** where the student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
- ***A regular class with withdrawal assistance*** where the student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.

Range of Placements: Special Class as Home Base

- ***A special education class with partial integration*** where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to [Regulation 298](#), section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
- ***A full-time special education class*** where the student-teacher ratio conforms to [Regulation 298](#), section 31, for the entire school day;

The Option of Special Class Placement

Before recommending placement in a special education class, the IPRC would:

- 1. consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services would meet the student's needs;**
- 2. provide the rationale and added value of the special class placement in meeting the student's needs;**
- 3. and ensure that whatever the recommended placement, it is consistent with parental preference**

Any Other Options?

The IPRC may also consider referral to a provincial committee to assess a student's eligibility for admission to one of the Provincial Schools

The IEP

- Is expected to be developed in consultation with parent (s)
- can be developed for a student at any time if it is perceived that the student needs access to special education programs and/or services, but must be developed within 30 school days after the formal IPRC process and/or after school starts for the year
- Must include specific educational expectations and the special education programs and services that will be received in order to meet expectations

The IEP

- **Must include a statement about how progress will be reviewed and evaluated**
- **Samples for different profiles may be viewed at www.ontariodirectors.ca/IEP-PEI/en.html**
- **and the guide for IEP development and implementation can be seen at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/spaced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf**

The In-School Team and/or IPRC Meeting

- You don't have to go alone
- You want to be prepared factually and emotionally
- Feel free to ask any questions that will help inform your consent
- Stay focused on the goal of the meeting
- Listen actively and agree where you know you can agree
- Be assertive, not aggressive
- Stand tall, sit high, and make regular eye contact
- Anticipate questions/objections/clarifications
- Be prepared to educate, but also to be educated

What Else?

- **Should there be a disagreement with respect to the supportive special education programs and services needed, special education students and their families have the right to have their interests represented**
- **Shared Solutions - A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs that can be accessed at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/shared.pdf is intended to help parents, educators, and special education students work together to prevent and/or resolve conflicts, and allow students to achieve greater independence, accessibility, and integration, consistent with their full and true potential.**