

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication replaces the *Special Education Information Handbook, 1984*. It reflects the many changes that have taken place in legislation, regulations, policy, and educational practice since publication of the earlier document.

The present document has benefited from the suggestions of a wide variety of organizations and individuals. The Ministry of Education is grateful to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education, to special education coordinators from across the province, and to a variety of associations for their advice, feedback, and significant contributions to the materials in this guide. The ministry also acknowledges the contribution of Alberta Education. Material from the binder *Programming for Students With Special Needs, Individualized Program Plans, 1995* is used by permission of Alberta Education, as represented by the Minister of Education and the Special Education Branch.

Material in this guide may be periodically superseded by new legislation or information, or as a result of evolving research and practice. The guide will be updated as required.

Readers may also read and download information from the Ministry of Education website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education in Ontario is committed to ensuring that all students have the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to succeed in a rapidly changing society and that they are provided with the learning opportunities and supports they require. In order to do this, the ministry establishes legislation, regulations, and policies regarding the governance, funding, and delivery of education.

The context of special education and the provision of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils in Ontario are constantly evolving. Provisions included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code have driven some of these changes. Others have resulted from the evolution and sharing of best practices related to the teaching and assessment of exceptional pupils.

The provision of special education programs and services for the youth of this province rests within a legal framework. The Education Act and the regulations related to it set out the legal responsibilities pertaining to special education. They provide comprehensive procedures for the identification of exceptional pupils, for the placement of those pupils in educational settings where the special education programs and services appropriate to their needs can be delivered, and for the review of the identification of exceptional pupils and their placement.

To assist school boards and schools in delivering educational programs to exceptional pupils in accordance with its policies, the ministry has prepared this revised and updated version of its guide to special education. The guide provides comprehensive information about legislation, regulations, policies, program planning, and resources pertaining to the education of exceptional pupils in Ontario. It is intended primarily for the use of administrators, special education professionals, teachers, and special education advisory committees (SEACs). Parents¹ of special needs students may also find this document useful.

The guide is divided into the following eight sections:

“Part A. Legislation and Policy” describes the legislative and policy framework for special education programs and services.

“Part B. Funding for Special Education” describes funding for special education.

“Part C. Program Planning” describes a process of problem solving that focuses on the needs of the student, on programming, and on referral for identification.

1. Hereafter, throughout this document, *parent* or *parents* is used to refer to both parent(s) and guardian(s).

“Part D. The Identification, Placement, and Review Process”

describes the IPRC and appeals processes as set out in Regulation 181/98.

“Part E. The Individual Education Plan (IEP)” provides a guide to the development of an IEP.

“Part F. Programs and Services” describes specialized programs and services that are available to assist school boards and schools in meeting the needs of the exceptional pupil.

“Part G. Related Ministries: Roles and Resources” provides information about the roles and resources of related ministries.

“Part H. Appendices” includes copies of policies related to special education as well as support materials.

This guide will be updated as needed. For that reason, it is in loose-leaf format with replacements or additional sections to be released as new legislation or policies are issued.