

Ministry of Education

Special Education Policy
and Programs Branch
18th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Direction des politiques et des programmes
de l'éducation de l'enfant en difficulté
18^e étage, édifice Mowat
900, rue Bay
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Superintendents of Special Education

FROM: Barry Finlay, Director
Special Education Policy and Programs Branch

DATE: April 30, 2014

SUBJECT: **Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Training
Requirements to support students with Autism
Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

In December 2013, the Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (OAGO) was released. As part of the audit, autism services and supports provided through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) were reviewed.

The OAGO included in their audit, a recommendation that the Ministry of Education define training requirements to assist educators to use applied behaviour analysis (ABA) principles in the classroom to support students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Considerable evidence exists that ABA methods benefit achievement of all students, including students with ASD, where appropriate, at both primary and secondary panels. ABA uses methods based on scientific principles of learning and behavior to build useful repertoires and reduce problematic ones. *Policy and Program Memorandum No. 140, Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)* was released in 2007. School boards have been directed through this PPM to use ABA methods with students with ASD, where appropriate, in accordance with students' Individual Education Plans, and transition plans.

In response, the ministry has developed a list of requirements that may be included in training opportunities provided by school boards to educators who work or may work with students with ASD. All school board ABA Expertise Professionals were provided the opportunity to offer input into the developed training requirements through each regional ABA professional learning community. During this year's ABA Expertise Professional Learning Day, the ministry communicated the list of training requirements.

The formal or informal training opportunities and/or mentoring on ABA should be

practical and oriented at developing classroom educators' skills to apply and individualize ABA and cover the following content:

- Behaviour
- Functions of Behaviour
- Assessments and data collection to inform ABA instructional methods
- Development, implementation and monitoring of effective Individual Education Plans and Transition Plans that incorporate ABA methods in a variety of educational settings
- Principles of ABA, with a focus on ABA instructional methods to support students with ASD and other students who may benefit.

The ministry will work collaboratively with school boards to ensure that key principles of ABA instruction are included in training opportunities that will be made available to all school boards. This summer, the ministry will continue its partnership with the Geneva Centre for Autism in providing training opportunities through the annual summer institute training. Additionally, beginning in September 2014, Geneva will offer an ABA Certificate Course for Educators through online e-Learning modules that focus on comprehensive training on ABA, including evidence-based behavioural strategies that can be incorporated into the classroom setting to promote student achievement and well-being. The ministry will provide boards with an allocation of spaces to participate in the ABA Certificate Course for Educators online e-Learning modules. This certificate course complements the existing free online series for educators already available through the Geneva website. Boards may also wish to use their annual ABA training funding to support these learning opportunities.

School boards will be expected to monitor the availability and participation of educators in ABA training opportunities provided by the board. The ministry will begin monitoring provincial implementation of training requirements through the 2014-15 annual Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 140 Survey.

Thank you in advance for your support in making these training requirements available to your staff.

Sincerely,

Barry Finlay