

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

A guide for parents in Inclusion Support Services

September 2021

This guide contains information for parents to prepare their child for school.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1-877-464-9675
york.ca/children



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York Region Inclusion Support Services

WHAT IS INCLUSION SUPPORT SERVICES?

Inclusion Support Services supports licensed child care programs, including licensed home care, after-school programs or an approved recreation program in York Region that provides services to children with special needs from birth to age 13. Inclusion Support Services ensures that children who may require support have equal access to inclusive licensed child care programs in York Region by providing support to the child care program through collaborative consultation visits with program staff and support for families' service coordination needs, as required.

HOW IS SUPPORT PROVIDED?

Early Interventionists (EIs) provide support to children, families and early learning and child care providers (through licensed child care programs).

Early Interventionists are **child development specialists** who:

- Support licensed child care providers
- Support inclusion in community programs
- Screen children's development for delays
- Help navigate the system of services available
- Facilitate a smooth transition to elementary school

Inclusion Support Services support to School-Age Programs

HOW IS SUPPORT PROVIDED?

Inclusion Support Services provides the following supports to licensed school-age programs, caring for children ages four to 13, in York Region:

- Collaborative classroom consultation for early learning and child care professionals by a York Region Early Interventionist
- Capacity building educational opportunities on inclusive practices
- Learning opportunities to promote children’s social and emotional skills, and interest in learning through Positive Early Childhood Education Program (PECE) coaching
- Connections to other resources in the community, including children’s mental health supports and York Region school boards
- In partnership with the early learning and child care program, the Early Interventionist will develop a classroom plan tailored to the needs of the after-school program to build more inclusive practices to support children of all abilities

Licensed after-school programs can make a classroom or child-specific consultation request by submitting the [Inclusion Support Services School-Age Consultation Request Form](#) to Inclusion Support Services at york.ca/specialneeds

Transition to school timetable

**For the York Catholic District School Board and
York Region District School Board**

Transition planning is important to have successful goals/outcomes for children in school. This process starts the year before your child begins school and takes place throughout the year.

Transition activity	When
<p>Parents are invited to attend a Transition to School Notification group session to learn about the process and complete the “Notification of Support Needs for a Child Transitioning to School” report.</p> <p>You can ask questions, listen and learn from other parents, and possibly meet other families going to your child’s school.</p> <p>If you are unable to attend this session, your Early Interventionist can complete the notification and consent documents with you. This notification is sent to the school board you select to help them plan for your child’s transition into school.</p>	<p>October – November (year before school entry)</p>
<p>The Early Interventionist informs parents about the school board’s dates, times and locations for the special education information sessions.</p> <p>These sessions provide information about the school programs and identify various school board personnel and resources.</p>	<p>November (year before school entry)</p>
<p>School boards schedule a transition meeting (to be held sometime between January and May) to discuss your child’s special education needs. If the school board transition meeting has not been scheduled by the end of February you may contact the principal of your child’s home school to inquire. You also may invite your Early Interventionist to attend if you would like support at this meeting.</p>	<p>December – February</p>
<p>Parents register their child at their home school.</p>	<p>January</p>
<p>School boards host special education information evenings for parents.</p>	<p>January</p>
<p>Parents attend a transition meeting with the school board. If the parent plans to send their child to an after-school program, the supervisor of the school-age program may also attend this meeting.</p>	<p>January – May</p>
<p>Your Early Interventionist will complete a Transition to School /End of Service Report, and you will be discharged from Inclusion Support Services. You are encouraged to share this report with your child’s classroom teacher.</p>	<p>August</p>

Tips for preparing for school

This list of suggestions can help you better prepare your children for school. You can choose the ones that might be most helpful for your child. Feel free to discuss with your Early Interventionist which tips on the following list are most appropriate for your child.

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION

- Help your child learn to be comfortable with interacting with other children and adults through community outings (such as visiting the library or park)
- Set up group experiences with other children by registering your child in recreational and preschool programs and/or informal experiences with neighbours, friends and extended family. Encourage turn-taking and sharing
- Look at your child's communication in terms of how he/she can make his/her needs known to others; gesturing for attention and expressing pleasure and/or displeasure are part of this
- When your child is having difficulty with a task, encourage him/her to request assistance; at snacks and mealtimes, help your child ask for more by modelling verbally or non-verbally

SCHOOL ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES

- Have some consistent rules and routines at home, such as meal and bedtime routines. When giving directions, be consistent and help your child in following through
- Provide activities that will help your child become familiar with classroom materials. A child-sized chair and table, creative materials (scissors, crayons, and playdough), puzzles, sand and water-play are just a few examples
- Organize toys at home so that your child can locate them and make choices independently; have your child tidy up afterwards

INDEPENDENT PLAY

- Expect your child to play independently at home with various activities. Choose materials that he/she is comfortable with and enjoys. Start off with short periods of time, gradually increasing the time
- Encourage your child to start and complete all tasks; this may require your assistance and modelling

ATTENDING/PARTICIPATING

- Sing songs, use finger plays and encourage participation
- Read simple books with your child; make comments and/or ask questions about the pictures and stories
- Play games and set up activities that encourage your child to share and take turns

TRANSITIONS

- A consistent routine is ideal; however, incorporate enough flexibility so that changes in routine are accepted. For example, have a picnic lunch instead of lunch at the table
- Help your child learn to move from one activity to the next by providing a warning that the activity is going to end and that a new activity will begin. You may try using a timer to help your children understand the expectations of a start and end time
- Change routines at home to accommodate school hours before September; make sure your child's wake up and meal times at home match the school day
- Familiarize your child with the school and playground before school starts, for example, taking walks to the school and reading books and singing songs about going to school and taking the bus (such as *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn)

SELF-HELP INDEPENDENCE

- Encourage your child to be responsible for their personal belongings by having a specific place for various items such as toys and outdoor clothes; consider hanging a hook at the child's level to increase their independence
- Increase independence in toileting routines, such as pulling pants up and down and handwashing routines; make note of any accommodations your child may need, for example a grab bar or stool
- Encourage your child to sit at the table for snacks and meals; increase their independence for example by allowing them the opportunity to practice opening containers, lunch bag, backpack etc.

Elementary school programs

There are many special education options available.

Discuss which options are the best for your child with your Early Interventionist and the school support team, who will help facilitate the transition.

To learn more about the services and programs offered at the York Region school boards, please visit the school board websites. You will find everything you need to know about school and special education.

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (YCDSB)

ycdsb.ca/programs-services/kindergarten/

Visit the Student Services/Special Education page

ycdsb.ca/programs-services/student-services/ for the following:

- Parent's Guide to Special Education (available in [English](#), [Italian](#), [Spanish](#) and [Cantonese](#))
- Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) Process
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Programs/Services
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

FRENCH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD (MONAVENIR)

cscmonavenir.ca

Visit the Student Services page cscmonavenir.ca/services/service-a-leleve/ to learn about:

- Specialized services available for students with autism, learning disabilities, developmental delays, low vision/blindness, speech delay and more

YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (YRDSB)

yrdsb.ca yrdsb.ca

Visit the Student Services/Special Education page yrdsb.ca/student-support/special-education for the following:

- Referral process - Guide for parents and students with information on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) Process
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Special Education Funding for Assistive Devices Technology and Equipment for Children with Special Needs
- A Communication Guide for Parents and Students

For Home Schooling Guidelines for Parents and Home Instruction procedures for students unable to attend school for medical or social emotional reasons, visit [yrdsb.ca/Home-Instruction-and-Home-Schooling](https://www.yrdsb.ca/Home-Instruction-and-Home-Schooling)

FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD (VIAMONDE)

[csviamonde.ca](https://www.csviamonde.ca)

Visit the Student Services page for the following: [Enfance en difficulté \(csviamonde.ca\)](https://www.csviamonde.ca/Enfance-en-difficulte)

- The Parent's Guide
- Annual Plan for Special Education
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)

HOME-BASED EDUCATION

Some parents may choose to educate their children at home, for a variety of reasons. Resources to support this choice are available at:

[canadianhomeeducation.com/](https://www.canadianhomeeducation.com/) Canadian Home Education Resources (CHER)

[ontariohomeschool.org/](https://www.ontariohomeschool.org/) Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents (OFTP)

SPECIALIZED TREATMENT AND ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Autism Ontario Program

[ontario.ca/autism](https://www.ontario.ca/autism)

- Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

W. Ross Macdonald School for the Deaf and Blind

pdsbnet.ca/en/schools/w-ross-macdonald/

- Deafblind Resource Services at the W. Ross Macdonald School provides consultative services for pre-school and school aged children up to the age of 21, with deafblindness residing within the Province of Ontario
- Resource consultants available to work with blind/visually impaired and deafblind students

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf

pdsbnet.ca/en/schools/sir-james-whitney/

- Provides education for students from junior kindergarten to grade 8 with American Sign Language and English as the primary languages of student and communication

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf

pdsbnet.ca/en/schools/ernest-c-drury/

- Offers a wide range of programming for students ages four to 21

York Hills Centre for Children, Youth and Families

yorkhills.ca/

- Day treatment program for ages four to 12 years

Bloorview School Authority at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

bloorviewschool.ca

- Individualized education programs set up in conjunction with ongoing therapeutic and medical care

Services for children age six and above

The following is a list of organizations offer services that **may** be appropriate to support your child and your family in the future. Please visit the provided websites for more information.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

cnib.ca/en/programs-and-services?region=on

Children’s Treatment Network (CTN)

ctnsy.ca/

Community Living York South

communitylivingyorksouth.ca/

Family Services York Region

fsyr.ca/

Jewish Family and Child – The Family Resource Centre (FRC)

jfundcs.com/frc

York Hills Centre for Children, Youth and Families

yorkhills.ca/

York Support Services Network

yssn.ca/

Mackenzie Health - Centre for Behaviour Health Sciences for Children and Families

mackenziehealth.ca/programs-services/mental-health/centre-for-behaviour-health-sciences-for-children-and-families

Online resources

Autism Speaks – tips to get your child who has autism ready to start school

(This is an American website – some tips regarding schools are not applicable to education in Ontario)

act.autismspeaks.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=10462.0&dlv_id=14709

Best Start - Ontario's Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre: A Booklet for Parents - Learning to Play and Playing to Learn: Getting Ready for School

beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/pdf/school_readiness_english_fnl.pdf

ConnectABILITY - tips for parents, caregivers and teachers

connectability.ca/category/kids/

Easter Seals – tips sheets for parents for successful transitions to school

- education.easterseals.org/category/supporting-success/supporting-student-transitions/

Eye See...Eye Learn - Vision program sponsored by the Government of Ontario

optom.on.ca/esel/

Kerry's Place Autism Services – Parent Guide to School Supports and Parent Guide to Advocacy within the School System

kerrysplace.org/

Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

ontario.ca/page/children-special-needs

Ontario Ministry of Education's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/

Please speak to your Early Interventionist if you have any questions about this guide.

York Region Early Intervention Services office locations:

Georgina

24262 Woodbine Avenue
Georgina, ON L4P 3E9

Markham

9275 Markham Road, Unit 15
Markham, ON L6E 1A2

Newmarket

17150 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 8X7

Richmond Hill

50 High Tech Rd, 4th floor
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4N7

13175 Yonge Street
Richmond Hill, ON L4E 0G6

Vaughan

9060 Jane Street, 2nd floor
Vaughan, ON L4K 0G5

To learn more about York Region Early Intervention Services, please visit york.ca/specialneeds or call the **KIDS Line** at **1-888-703-KIDS (5437)**