

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

A guide for parents in Infant and Child Development Services

Revised October 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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Planning for the transition from home to school

100 to 200 children whose families receive support from York Region Early Intervention Services - Infant and Child Development Services (ICDS) enter school every year.

The transition to school process usually starts a year before your child begins school.

While it is an exciting and happy time, we know it can be stressful for some children with special needs and their families. The following information highlights how Infant and Child Development Services (ICDS) prepares you and your child for school to make sure the transition to school is smooth and your child adjusts well to this new environment.

Please note that any in-person services and programs will be subject to current COVID-19 public health guidelines.

ROUTINES-BASED INTERVENTION

Your child learns all day long by doing everyday things. You can help your child during those times.

Parents meet regularly with their Early Interventionist to:

- Develop a Family Service Plan that includes transition to school goals/outcomes
- Learn how daily routines and activities help to prepare your child for school
- Learn about additional services and programs in the community and referral processes
- Learn how to advocate with the school boards for support for your child
- Understand what to expect at school transition meetings

Visits are about an hour long and are scheduled Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at your home, virtually through video conferencing or telephone, at an Early Intervention Services office, or in the community, such as an EarlyON Child and Family Centre.

Tips for preparing for school

The shift from learning at home to formal education at school is a normal and expected part of every child's life.

Discuss with your Early Interventionist which tips on the following list are most appropriate for your child and can be included in your Family Service Plan.

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION

- Help your child learn to be comfortable interacting with children their age and other adults
- Plan trips in your neighborhood to parks, libraries and other places children go
- Register your child in a summer camp, recreation or preschool program
- Encourage your child to communicate their need for help
- Help your child learn to regulate their emotions and teach them how to cope

SCHOOL ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES

- Have some consistent rules and routines at home, such as meal and bedtime routines
- Be consistent and help your child follow two to three step directions
- Help your child be comfortable with classroom materials, such as a child-sized chair, scissors, crayons, playdough and puzzles
- Help your child to start and finish tasks, tidy up and put away things where they belong
- Visit the school playground and play areas
- Practice going to the school (walking or taking a town bus) with your child carrying their own backpack
- Read books and sing songs about going to school and taking the bus (such as *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn)

TRANSITIONS

- Although a consistent daily routine is best, teach your child to be flexible and to try new things
- Help your child learn to move from one activity to the next by giving them a warning that the activity is going to end and that a new activity will begin

- Use a timer to help with transitioning from one routine to the next
- Make sure your child's wake up and meal times at home match the school day

SELF-HELP INDEPENDENCE

- Have a specific place for toys and outdoor clothes and help your child put things away
- Hang a hook at the child's level so they can hang up their coat
- Practice toileting sequence (pulling pants up and down, wiping, handwashing)
- Tell the teacher about any equipment your child may need
- Encourage your child to sit at the table for snacks and meals
- Practice opening containers, lunch bag, backpack and water bottle
- Practice packing and unpacking their backpack
- Practice putting coat, shoes and boots on and taking them off

Here are some examples of goals/outcomes from a Family Service Plan

1. Child will pack, unpack and carry a backpack for summer outings to the park
2. Child will participate in lunch and snack time by eating two bites of a granola bar, two slices of an apple
3. Parent(s) will attend a parent workshop to learn about how to help their child calm down and avoid hitting when frustrated
4. Parent(s) will read books with their child at bedtime and naptime to increase their interest and attention for this activity
5. Parent(s) will encourage their child's social skills by attending EarlyON programs during the summer

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
With the support of their Early Interventionist, Parents complete the “Transition to School Notification” report and sign a consent form allowing for their Early Interventionist to share the report with the school board to help them plan for your child’s school entry.	October – November (year before school entry)
The Early Interventionist informs parents about the school board’s dates, times and locations for the special education information sessions. These sessions provide information about the school programs and identify various school board personnel and resources.	November (year before school entry)
School boards schedule a transition meeting (to be held sometime between January and May) to discuss your child’s special education needs. You may invite your Early Interventionist to attend if you would like support at this meeting.	December – February
You and your Early Interventionist review the Family Service Plan to make sure it includes transition to school goals/outcomes.	January
Parents register their child at their home school.	January
School boards host special education information evenings for parents.	January
Parents attend a transition meeting with the school board.	January – May
Your Early Interventionist will complete an End of Service Report, and you will be discharged from Infant and Child Development Services. You may wish to share any relevant reports, service plans or documentation with your child’s classroom teacher if you feel it would support their transition.	August

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.

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-levele/ for the following:

- 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

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)
- A Communication Guide for Parents and Students

- Special Education Funding for Assistive Devices Technology and Equipment for Children with Special Needs

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

FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD (VIAMONDE)

csviamonde.ca

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

- 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 Canadian Home Education Resources (CHER)

ontariohomeschool.org Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents (OFTP)

SPECIALIZED TREATMENT AND ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Kinark Child and Family Services: Autism Services

kinarkautismservices.ca

- Applied Behavioural Analysis school support staff help children with autism transition effectively into school

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

Bloorview School Authority at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

bloorviewschool.ca

- Individualized education programs together with ongoing therapeutic and medical care

York Region 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

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 Program - 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)**