

Special Education Program Overview and Improvement Planning



Exceptionality: Autism
Placement: Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance

A. Definition:

The Ministry of Education defines Autism as:

“A severe learning disorder that is characterized by disturbances in rate of educational development, ability to relate to the environment, mobility, and/or perception, speech and/or language; or lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language. “

In the TCDSB, a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder is required for an identification of Autism. The basis of diagnosis is DSM-V, which includes the following characteristics:

- Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts
- Restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities
- Symptoms present in the early developmental period
- Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning
- Symptoms are not better explained by intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) or global developmental delay¹

If the assessment is from a medical or psychology practitioner from the community or other school board, a **Psychology File Note by TCDSB psychology staff may be required** indicating that the student meets TCDSB identification criteria.

If other diagnoses are also present, each exceptionality will be identified separately, as per TCDSB and Ministry of Education criteria.

If no assessment has been completed, Autism is not proposed and a referral for appropriate assessment(s) will be recommended.

¹ DSM-V

B. Placement options:

- Indirect Support
- Regular Class with Resource Assistance
- Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance**
- Special Education Placement with Partial Integration – Intensive Support Program (ISP)
- Full-Time Special Education Placement

C. Description:

For a student with a diagnosis of Autism, Regular Class Placement with Withdrawal Assistance refers to placement in a regular class for most of the day and s/he receives instruction outside of the class for less than 50% of the day, from a qualified Special Education teacher.

Individualized educational programming in elementary and secondary schools for students with a diagnosis of Autism is provided in their areas of need, and where appropriate, across the curriculum through the application of appropriate accommodations and modifications to provide access to the Ontario curriculum, as documented in the IEP. Alternative programming may also be provided in the student's areas of need that are not part of the Ontario Curriculum in areas such as social skills, self-regulation, sensory differences, life skills and communication.

For students with a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome or high functioning Autism or Autism Level 1² indicating average cognitive functioning, they may fit criteria for the following withdrawal program. The Program to Assist Social Thinking (PAST) uses a cognitive behaviour approach that provides intensive support to students with a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome or high functioning Autism or Autism Level 1. These students do not automatically assimilate the unwritten rules of social interaction. Students with high functioning Autism must be directly taught how to have successful interactions at home, school and in the community. The PAST program focus is on the enhancement of perspective taking ability of students. Skills areas addressed include the understanding of emotions of self and others, communication, cooperative play, development of relationships, understanding of diagnosis, problem solving and self-advocacy. An alternative curriculum has been developed to address these areas. Students attend the PAST program one day per week. The program is delivered by a qualified Special Education teacher and Child and Youth Worker. Support Staff from the student's home school is involved with the program to ensure

² DSM-5 criteria

generalization of skills. In addition, staff work with parents and home school staff to ensure that skills taught in the PAST program are generalized to other settings.

Program development is also consistent with PPM 140 requirements – individualization in program planning, use of positive reinforcement, data collection and analysis to inform programming, programming for generalization of skills, attention and transitions.

D. Planning Components:

| Key Contact(s): System Design: Chief of Autism Programs and Services Program Operation: Chief of Autism Programs and Services | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. PROGRAM DESIGN, ADMINISTRATION AND INSTRUCTION | | |
| Components | Description | Responsibility |
| Grades | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JK – Grade 12 plus (age 21) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal |
| Group size | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular class size as per ministry guidelines and collective agreements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Area Superintendent |
| Time & Frequency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on the needs of the student and school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Regular Classroom Teacher Special Education Teacher SBSLT (School Based Support Learning Team) Staff, as required |
| Facility Requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on student need Less than 50% withdrawal from regular class Secondary student may attend the resource period designated on their timetable or during other periods on their timetable Students enrolled in the PAST program attend one day per week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Superintendent of Special Services |
| Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busing, as per board policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Transportation Department |
| School selection criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area and/or Special Services Superintendent |
| Locations/schools involved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student attends home school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area and/or Special Services Superintendent |
| Accountability Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a framework for accountability and continuous improvement is in process Goals will be set by the committee, in accordance with overall goals from the Special Services Department, using the goal format approved by the board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Superintendent of Special Services Accountability Framework Committee |

2. STUDENTS

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|--|--|---|
| Early Identification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to TCDSB Early & Ongoing Identification Protocol for Kindergarten to Grade 3 • Intake meetings, case conferences, consultations • School Based Support Learning Team³ meetings (SBSLT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principal • Special Education teacher • Classroom teacher • SBSLT members • Parent |
| Referral | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnosis of Autism is required for referral for service and IPRC • Referral for support requires the school to first consult with the Autism Support Teacher to determine the appropriate level of support • Request for Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting based on Ministry of Education and TCDSB identification criteria, and may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ *Psychological Assessment ○ *Medical Assessment ○ *Multi-disciplinary Assessment • Parental/guardian consent • Student consent, as appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home School Principal • SBSLT members, as appropriate |
| Identification by Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism diagnosis required as documented by appropriate professional • Formal identification through Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) • School presents information • Parent/guardian consent • Student consent, as appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal or parent may request IPRC • Area Principal chairs IPRC • SBSLT member, as appropriate • Parent/Guardian • Student, if older than 16 years of age |
| Placement decisions by Identification, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement decision recommended through Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Principal chairs IPRC • Principal |

³ School Based Support Learning Team (SBSLT) includes members of the School Based Support Team (Psychologist, Speech & Language Pathologist, Social Worker, Assessment & Programming Teacher (elementary)/Programming & Assessment Teacher (secondary))

2. STUDENTS

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|
| Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School presents information Parent/guardian consent Student consent, as appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent/Student |
| Admission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through IPRC process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal SBSLT members, as appropriate |
| IPRC - Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reviews are required; they may be waived by parents/guardians under specific Ministry and TCDSB guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal chairs Parent/guardian Special Education Teacher, Regular Classroom Teacher(s) SBSLT members, as appropriate |
| Individual Education Plan (IEP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An IEP is developed for an identified student to outline accommodations, modifications, alternative curriculum expectations and transition plans, as appropriate IEPs are updated at every reporting period, as needed IEPs are required for any student who meets the exceptionality criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Teachers Consultation from the SBSLT members, as appropriate Input from parents |
| Assessment to inform student learning (assessment for/as/of learning) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As outlined in Growing Success (Ministry of Education, 2010) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growingSuccessAddendum.pdf Growing Success Kindergarten Addendum (Ministry of Education, 2016) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growingSuccessAddendum.pdf Elementary and secondary curricular assessments as outlined by Curriculum and Accountability, appropriate to grade level Other standardized assessments as applicable (e.g., EQAO, CAT4) Assessment of individual expectations, as outlined in the IEP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Special Education Teacher, Regular Class Teacher Curriculum and Accountability resource staff, as appropriate SBSLT members, as appropriate Autism Team members, as appropriate |

2. STUDENTS

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific assessments or accommodations suitable for students with this exceptionality | |
| Formal assessment to inform student learning (e.g., psychology, speech and language, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical and/or Multi-Disciplinary may include: Psychological assessments, specific diagnosis, learning profile (strengths/needs) and programming recommendations • With parental consent, assessments by other disciplines may be required (SLP,OT, Audiology, PT) • Assessments are discussed with parent and school staff, when appropriate • Functional behaviour assessments, as needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principal • SBSLT members, as appropriate • Professionals from outside agencies, as appropriate • Parent consent is required |
| Transition Process | | |
| Demission /Change of Placement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For exceptional students, demission and change of placement can only be determined by the IPRC • Decision to demit/change placement may be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student needs ○ Classroom based assessment data ○ Additional assessment data (e.g., data integration platform) ○ New formal assessment data, where available ○ SBSLT recommendation ○ Parental input/request ○ Student request, if appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Principal chairs the review IPRC meeting • School Principal chairs the SBSLT meeting • Classroom teacher; Special Education Teacher • Participation of SBSLT members, as appropriate • Parent participation |
| Transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition planning is required for all students with Autism (PPM 140) and all students with an IEP (PPM 156) • Support provided for entry to school transition (Connections for Students) • Exchange of information meetings; Grade 8 to Grade 9, as per board policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principal • Teacher • Parent • SBSLT members • Other elementary and secondary school staff, as appropriate • Autism Programs and Services staff, on request |

2. STUDENTS

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|------------|--|----------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition to Secondary service available for students going from Grade 8 to Grade 9• Transition to post-secondary planning | |

3. PERSONNEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|--|--|---|
| Staff qualifications/training requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom teacher and Special Education teacher qualifications consistent with board policy and Ministry requirements Special Education teachers require Special Education Part 1 qualifications Autism Support Teacher has Special Education qualifications and experience with students with Autism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Area Superintendent Teacher Chief of Autism Programs and Services |
| Professional learning opportunities (e.g., training, mentoring, etc.) | <p>The following opportunities may be available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP training and updates Training in Assistive Technology Training in Data Integration Platform (DIP) PD opportunities offered by TCDSB Special Services, Curriculum and Accountability, and Student Success central staff PD opportunities offered at the local school level by members of the SBSLT SBSLT to provide support and mentoring, as needed Other PD opportunities outside of TCDSB CPI Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Teacher TCDSB Special Services, Curriculum & Accountability, Student Success central staff SBSLT members Chief of Autism Programs and Services |
| Reflective practice: tools to inform teacher learning and practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be used periodically by school teams, and groups of regular classroom and Special Education teachers to guide practice, with participation of the Educational Research Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Teacher Special Services central staff Educational Research Department |
| Staff Appraisal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal |
| Resources | | |
| Components | Description | Responsibility |
| Classroom resources/materials | <p>Resource materials may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School block budget and Special Services funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Teachers Area Superintendent |

3. PERSONNEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|---|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary and secondary curricular resources (literacy, numeracy) • Ministry of Education documents individualized materials recommended or provided by Autism Programs and Services • Ministry and Board documents re: education of students with ASD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with SBSLT • Autism Programs and Services Department Staff |
| Special Equipment Amount (SEA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on individual learning needs, as recommended by a relevant qualified professional • Equipment must be essential for access to the curriculum for a claim to be made (must meet Ministry of Education SEA criteria) • As per Ministry of Education Guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • School Principal • Superintendent, Special Services • SBSLT staff • Information Technology staff, as required • Ministry of Education |
| Special Incidence Portion (SIP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for funding submitted for students with intensive safety and/or health needs according to Ministry of Education SIP criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principal • Teacher • Superintendent, Special Services • Support by SBSLT and Special Services staff |
| Professional Support Central/Regional/External | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing program and student support is provided by SBSLT members • Consultation and direct support as appropriate by TCDSB staff including the school SLP, psychology, social work, APT/PAT • Autism Programs and Services staff • The focus of the support is on differentiating instruction and enhancing learning and social opportunities in the classroom • Community/outside agency support is governed by the TCDSB Third Party Protocol and Partnership Agreements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principal • Teacher • SBSLT staff as appropriate • Special Services, Curriculum and Accountability, Student Success central staff • Autism Programs and Services staff |

3. PERSONNEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Support documentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Education Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Ministry of Education, 2007) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/autismSpecDis.pdf • Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Resource Guide (TCDSB, 2012) • Policy/Program Memorandum 140 • Planning Entry to School, A Resource Guide (Ministry of Education, 2005) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/planningentry.pdf • Learning for All (Ministry of Education, 2009) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2013.pdf • Student Success High Yield Strategies (TCDSB, 2010) https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SchoolProgramsK12/ESL/ELL%20Documents/FINAL%202010%20HIGH%20YIELD%20SUPPORTING%20STUDENTS%20BOOK1.pdf • Supporting Student Success in Literacy Grades 7 - 12 (Ministry of Education, 2004) http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/literacy/literacy.pdf • Differentiated Instruction Resources and kits from Ministry of Education • Special Education Guide for Educators (Ministry of Education, 2001) http://www.tncdsb.on.ca/new/resources/SPED%20A%20Guide%20for%20Educators%2001.pdf • Transition Resource Guide (Ministry of Education, 2002) http://www.oafccd.com/documents/transitionguide.pdf • IEP Resource Guide (Ministry of Education, 2004) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Services Department and Superintendent • Curriculum & Accountability Department • Student Success |

3. PERSONNEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents on evidence-based intervention practices; e.g., research articles, websites, descriptive pamphlets, etc. | |

4. PARENTS

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Home/School Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing communication between classroom teacher and parent/guardian Parent-teacher interviews IPRCs and Annual Reviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom teacher School Principal Parent |
| Shared Solutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow process outlined in Shared Solutions (Ministry of Education, 2007) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/shared.pdf | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Special Education Teacher Parent School Principal Superintendent of Special Services Area Superintendent |
| Parent Guide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCDSB Parent Guide to Special Education https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SpecialEducation/ParentsGuide/Documents/Parent%20Guide%20-%20December%202015.pdf Autism Programs and Services brochures https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SpecialEducation/Autism/ProgramsServices/Pages/default.aspx | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Superintendent of Special Services |
| Parent Involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing communication Parent evening sessions such as curriculum nights Individual Education Plan (IEP) Participate in Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) meetings Participate in school based meetings Parent Teacher Interviews School and School Board Information Fairs Behaviour Support/Safety Plan development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal Teachers Parents Autism Department support |

5. COMMUNICATION

| Components | Description | Responsibility |
|-----------------|--|---|
| External | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCDSB Website/Portal • Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) • TCDSB Department Brochures • Information Fair • TCDSB Special Services Parent Guide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent of Special Services • Communication Department |
| Internal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCDSB Website/Portal • Email • Director’s Bulletin • Autism Programs and Services SharePoint site • TCDSB Policy and Procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent of Special Services • Principal • Communication Department |