



Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the Board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies to the Ministry and to the public.

The OCDSB believes that early identification and intervention to address special needs is essential to student success. The District uses a range of effective practices to accomplish this beginning from the time a student is registered to attend school in the OCDSB.

These procedures are a part of a continuous assessment and program planning process, which should be initiated when a child is first enrolled in school or no later than the beginning of a program of study immediately following kindergarten, and should continue throughout the child's school life. Districts are therefore expected to provide a range of programs to assist students in meeting the curriculum expectations. These programs should include early identification of learning needs, appropriate teaching strategies, ongoing assessment, and communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) and students. ([Policy & Program Memorandum No.11.](#))

The OCDSB makes every effort to review the needs of all students as early as possible. Early and ongoing tiered intervention is recognized as contributing to the well-being of all children and their ability to reach their potential. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are an integral part of the process. It is the belief of the OCDSB that continuous assessment and planning should exist for students throughout the education process. Learning abilities and needs are identified as early as possible. Programming is designed to support the student's needs and to help the student achieve to their fullest potential.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children from the beginning of the education process. They have a wealth of knowledge and valuable information that can assist in the education of their child. At kindergarten intake meetings, parent(s)/guardian(s) have the opportunity to share with the teacher information regarding their child's areas of strengths, areas of needs and any relevant medical or other information.

Tiered Approach for Early Identification and Intervention

(Assessment/Consultation/Intervention)

The tiered approach is an extremely effective approach to assessment and intervention which sequentially increases the intensity of instructional interventions ([Learning for All – A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013](#)). It is a model that promotes and facilitates the early identification of students' learning abilities and needs.





Student Registration Process - Kindergarten

As a component to the registration process for entry into kindergarten programs, parents / guardians are asked to complete a Kindergarten Intake form. This provides an opportunity for parents / guardians to describe their child's special learning needs. The information that parents / guardians provide is useful in initiating a number of actions to facilitate the entry of children with special needs into the school system.

The Kindergarten Educator Team (teacher, early childhood educator, and sometimes an educational assistant) are key in the education and early identification process. The kindergarten educator team works collaboratively with the family prior to the Kindergarten intake process and following the beginning of school. The educator team communicates regularly with the parent(s)/guardian(s) about students' progress and development in the early years. The teacher employs ongoing assessments (observation checklists, inventories, portfolios, conferences, in-depth anecdotal records, formal/informal assessments) and shares these with the parents / guardians as appropriate.

Parents / guardians who provide information indicating their child has or may have special needs prior to school entry, may be asked to provide signed parental consent for board personnel to make contact with preschool service providers to arrange an observation of their child. Where appropriate case conferences are routinely held with key stakeholders, including the parents, to share information about the student related to the necessary services once the child is attending school (e.g. occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech-language pathology, nursing support, special accommodations, etc.).

Student Registration Process Grade 1 - 12

Students who register to attend OCDSB schools and have been receiving an educational program elsewhere are reviewed at the time of registration for the need for additional support related to specific needs. The OCDSB Registration form provides parents / guardians with an opportunity to indicate whether or not their child has a particular cognitive, behavioural, physical, medical or developmental needs, and whether they have been receiving special supports and services in their current educational setting.

It is typical practice in the OCDSB to request as much information from the parents / guardians about the student available at the time of registration. Where a parent / guardian does not have copies of materials from the student record in their possession (e.g. report cards, assessment results), written permission to contact the student's current educational provider is obtained and these documents are requested. The Ontario Student Record (OSR) is requested using the required Ministry of Education form. Where it is apparent that a student has had extensive intervention and will continue to need support, an immediate referral to the school multi-disciplinary team





may occur. As a component of this process, school staff will contact multi-disciplinary or Learning Support Services personnel to assist in reviewing the student's most recent educational program and setting. If a student is attending a school in the Ottawa region, a site visit may occur (with written parental permission) to allow staff to observe the student in that setting and to discuss their strengths and needs with staff.

If a student has been identified as exceptional in another school district, the school team with parental participation will determine whether further assessment may be required and whether to initiate an Individual Education Plan (IEP). If it is deemed appropriate, a recommendation to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) may take place.

Student Data / Information Collection

Classroom educators collect a variety assessment data for all students in the primary years. This data provides information on students along a developmental continuum. the following represents a sample of data collected by educators in the primary years:

| Grade | Assessment | Purpose / Description |
|---|--|--|
| Year 1 (JK) Year 2 (SK) | Early Literacy / Numeracy Observation Tool (ELNOT) | To screen for early intervention and to gauge developmental growth of literacy and numeracy skills. |
| Year 1 (JK) Year 2 (SK) | Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-4) | To identify student strengths and needs in the areas of motor, concept, language, self-help, and social/emotional development. |
| Year 1 (JK) Year 2 (SK) November | The Kindergarten Communication of Learning: Initial Observation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide an overview of initial observations of the student's learning;• To provide educators with data to inform program planning. |
| Year 1 (JK) Year 2 (SK) February and June | The Kindergarten Communication of Learning | To provide reflections on the student's learning connected to the four program frames. |



| Grade | Assessment | Purpose / Description |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Year 1 (JK) Year 2 (SK) | Ongoing pedagogical documentation will be collected to identify developmental levels in all areas of learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide evidence of learning that will be shared with parents / guardians throughout the year; To provide educators with data to inform intentional and purposeful programming. |
| Grade 1 - 3 | Achievement Data - Provincial Report Cards and ongoing classroom assessments based on the curriculum | To assess ongoing student progress and identify areas in need of remediation. |
| Grade 1-3 | PM Benchmarks or GB+(fall and spring) | To determine student reading engagement, fluency, and comprehension. |
| Grade 3 | EQAO | To assess numeracy and literacy skills. |

Intervention Strategies, Programs, and Supports

Intervention strategies are in place to support students through a tiered approach, in which evidence-based assessment and instruction are systematically provided and respond to an individual's strengths and needs. The nature, intensity, and duration of interventions determined on the basis of the evidence gathered through frequent and systematic monitoring of the student's progress.

The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction (DI) will be used along with a tiered approach of greater personalization and precision to support the learning and teaching of students.

The following early interventions are available to all students demonstrating learning difficulties, whether identified formerly through an IPRC or not. These strategies are typically discussed with parents / guardians and appropriate school or system level staff prior to implementing them in the classroom.

- All primary teachers use a variety of strategies to teach phonemic development, phonological awareness, word recognition, decoding and comprehension;
- Special education teachers (LST / LRT) may work directly with students who present with a learning need;





- Program differentiation and classroom accommodations are developed for students as required;
- System level Learning Support Services staff are available to provide information, resources, and programming support for schools that have students with significant special needs. Referrals for system level supports originate from the school or LSS department;
- Development of behaviour intervention plans, student Safety Plans, Behaviour Management Plans (BMP);
- Multi-disciplinary team service via appropriate referrals;
- Professional services staff consultations with teachers or individual students to provide specific strategies to support the learning environment (with written parental consent);

The OCDSB has other system level teams to support a variety of exceptional learners. To access the following teams, schools are required to obtain parent/guardian consent and to submit a referral. The system level teams that assist school teams to support early identification and intervention include:

- Early Learning Team
- ASD / DD Team (also offer intake meetings when new to the District);
- Itinerant Educational Assistants

System level teams include multi-disciplinary professionals including educators, educational assistants, psychologists, social workers and speech-language pathologists that support students through consultation with parent/guardians, the school and the multi-disciplinary teams.

As detailed in Part 4 - Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies, the OCDSB works collaboratively with several community partners (e.g., First Words, CHEO) to maximize opportunities for early identification of special needs and to apply effective intervention strategies.

