

Introduction to Navigating BC's School System for Families with Children with ASD

Friday, November 15, 2019

Simon Fraser University – Harbour Centre
Vancouver, BC

Presented by

Veena Birring Hayer, MSW, RSW,

Sponsored by:

**Provincial Outreach Program for Autism
and Related Disorders (POPARD)**

Event Schedule

8:45	– 9:30	Check-In; Coffee Served
9:30	– 11:00	Session 1
11:00	– 11:15	Morning Break
11:15	– 12:45	Session 2
12:45	– 1:30	Lunch Break
1:30	– 3:00	Session 3

Tips for Improving the In-Person Conference Experience

- Please turn off your cell phones or put them on vibrate.
- In respect for the speakers and fellow participants, please do not whisper.
- This workshop is being web streamed to an online audience. Please ask questions using a microphone so that all can hear.
- Personal recording of any kind is strictly forbidden.
- Please secure your belongings! ACT cannot take responsibility for theft.
- Many of your fellow participants require a scent-free environment. Please be considerate.
- For your comfort, dress in layers. It may be a warm day but bring a sweater just in case!



Acknowledgements

This event has been made possible thanks to a collaboration between the Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders and ACT – Autism Community Training.

Those who have attended ACT – Autism Community Training’s events over the years know that we depend on community collaboration and support to sustain our work. Our volunteers and funders make it possible for us to provide cost-effective training in-person, via web streaming and online videos.

ACT’s volunteers range from parents and community groups, who advise us on venues and speakers, to ACT’s membership, including our Board of Directors, who provide a range of expertise. A special thanks to all those who volunteer at our events. These contributions are all essential to ACT’s work.

Special thanks to Veena Birring Hayer for presenting POPARD’s Introduction to Navigating B.C.’s School System for Parents of Children with Autism. Understanding how to get the appropriate support for their child can often be stressful for families and ACT is keen to provide families with as much information as possible.

Free Resources from ACT

Autism Videos @ ACT (AVA) – Over 50 quality online videos available free – without a log-in, thanks to our sponsors. www.actcommunity.ca/videos

ACT’s Autism Information Database (the AID) – Like Google for Autism but better! Keyword search nearly 1,500 curated AID records for evidence-informed, practical information resources useful to families and community professionals. www.actcommunity.ca/aid

ACT’s BC Community Resources Database – Search by your postal code for professionals and service providers throughout BC. www.actcommunity.ca/aid-search/community

ACT’s Autism Manual for B.C – 13 chapters! www.actcommunity.ca/autism-manual-for-bc -

ACT’s Monthly News Round-Up & Event Alerts - Sign-up to keep in touch with developments affecting the special needs community www.actcommunity.ca/updates

ACT’s Facebook - ACT carefully sources interesting, insightful stories to inform our 6,000 plus followers. www.facebook.com/autismcommunitytraining



Family-School Liaison Service

NAVIGATING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM: For Families of Children with ASD

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Agenda

9:30- 11:00am

- ▶ Introductions
- ▶ POPARD and Family School Liaison service
- ▶ Family-School Collaboration overview

-Break-

11:15am -12:45pm

- ▶ Questions/Answers
- ▶ School System overview

-Lunch-

1:30 -3pm

- ▶ Individual Education Plan overview
- ▶ Questions/Answers

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POPARD

Provincial Outreach Program For Autism and Related Disorders

Helping Schools Help Students

Mandate is to provide consultation, training and support services to all public and independent schools across BC, with a primary focus on increasing the capacity of school district staff to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

www.autismoutreach.ca

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POPARD Services

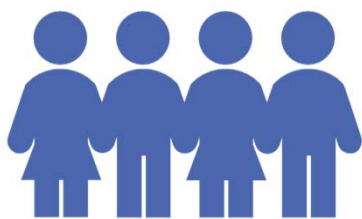
-  Consultation
-  Psycho-educational and Functional Behaviour Assessments
-  Training
-  Research Projects

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POPARD Family-School Liaison Service

- ▶ The Popard Family-School Liaison Service promotes collaboration between home and school to increase positive learning outcomes and optimal development for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- ▶ The service provides resources, guidance and support through various methods for families and school personnel.

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Family-School Collaboration

A framework for positive relationships
leading to optimal learning outcomes
for students with ASD

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Why Collaborate?

- ▶ Family-School partnerships, including the quality of communication between parents and teachers, have been shown to have substantial impact on students success in and out of school (Cheatham & Ostrosky, 2011; Mautone et al., 2015).
- ▶ ...there is a positive association between strong family and school relationships and young people's academic achievement (Hampton-Thompson & Galindo, 2017).
- ▶ Positive parent-teacher collaboration benefits the family, educators, and students with disabilities (Bezdak, Summers, & Turnbull, 2010; Zuna, Turnbull, Poston, & Summers, 2007).

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Collaboration

Research shows that parents and teachers often have different ideas about what aspects of collaboration are most important.

Burkhardt, S. (2017).

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Challenges parents describe...

- ▶ Poor communication
- ▶ Lack of engagement
- ▶ Difficulty getting information across
- ▶ Not feeling part of the team
- ▶ Nervous about bringing up concerns

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Collaboration

- ▶ Communication is important
- ▶ Acknowledgment that both educators and parents have different perspectives or assumptions

Burkhardt, S. (2017).

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Case Example Activity

- ▶ Johnny is 6 years old, and in grade 1. He is diagnosed with ASD and has average cognition. His mom also describes him as highly anxious.
- ▶ It is the end of October, and the IEP meeting has not been scheduled yet. However, there has been one meeting with the teacher, case manager and parent in September to review Johnny's needs and general strategies that work.
- ▶ Johnny's mother and the teacher have had some informal chats before or after school, but they always seem to be rushed. The teacher states that he has some difficulty with transitions, he can become very chatty about topics he is interested in which can be disruptive.
- ▶ Johnny's mother is feeling uncertain about what his day looks like, and if there are additional concerns that she might not be aware of. Johnny has said to his parents that he "doesn't like school", and "school is boring".

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Case Example

COLLABORATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND SCHOOL- Case example Johnny

- ▶ WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES?

- ▶ WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

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The 4 A's of Collaboration

(Sandra L. Christenson and Susan M. Sheridan, 2001)

- ▶ Approach
- ▶ Attitudes
- ▶ Atmosphere
- ▶ Action

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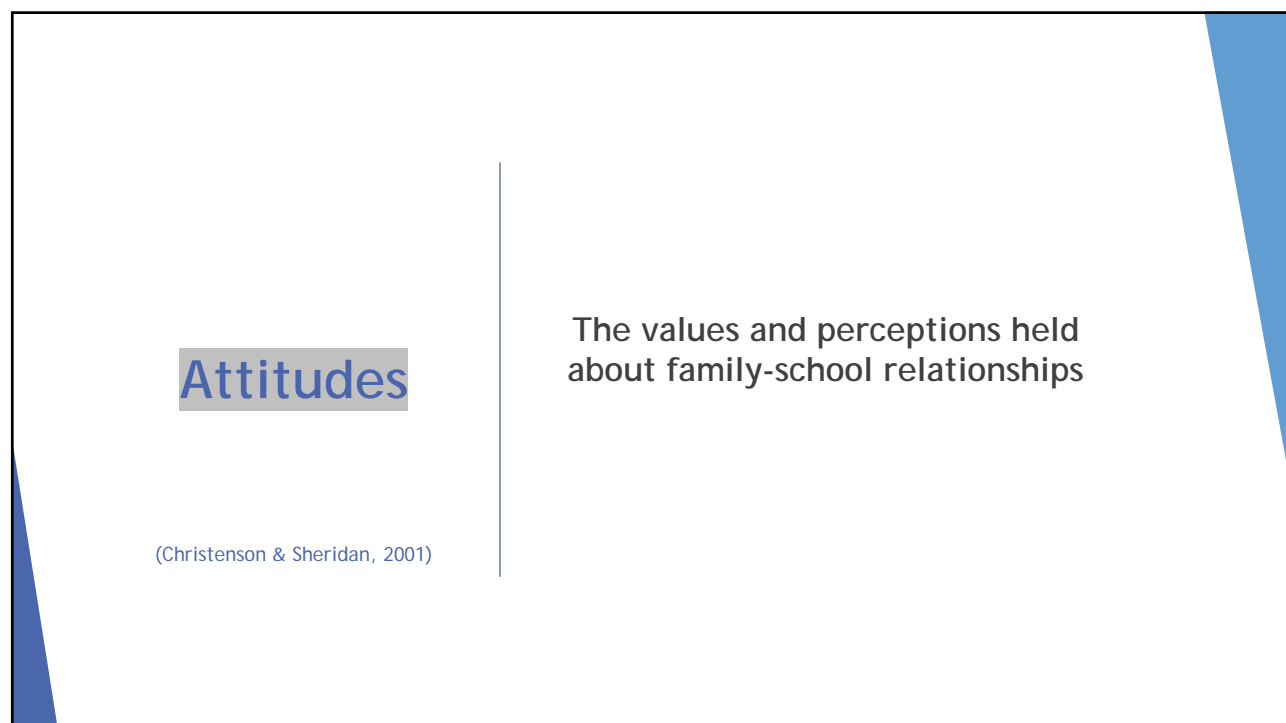
Video Clip

Activity

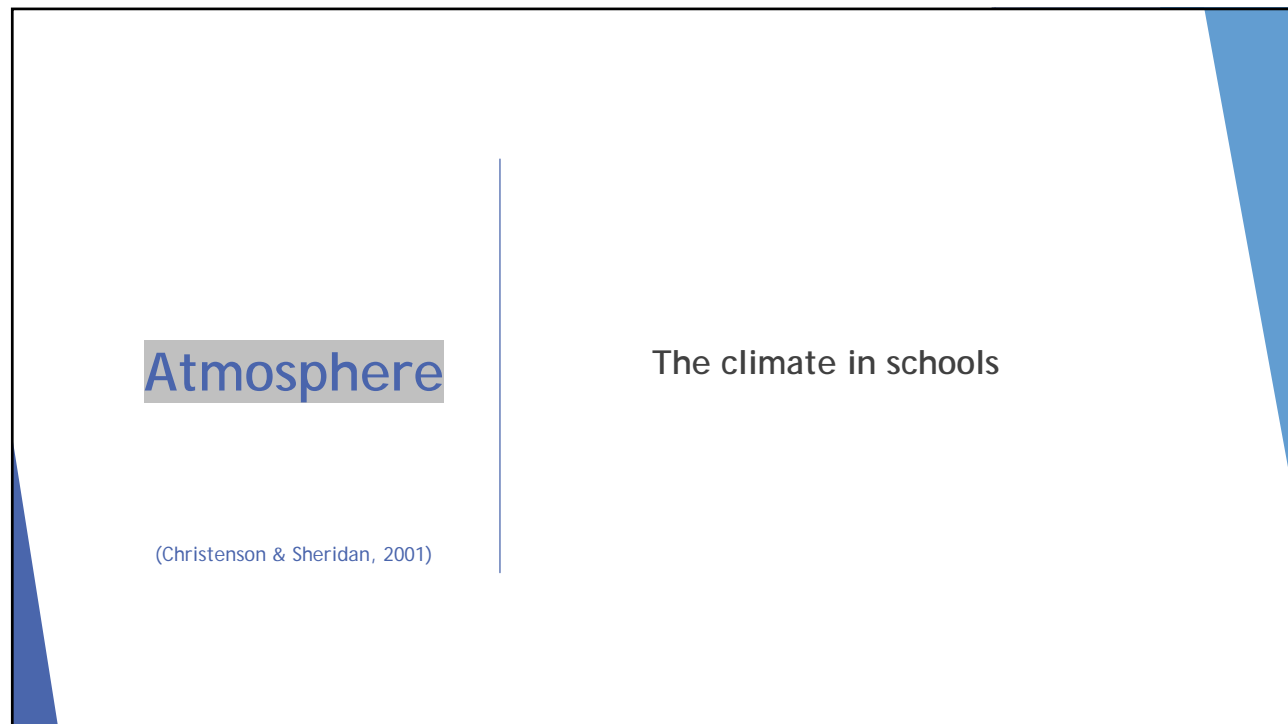
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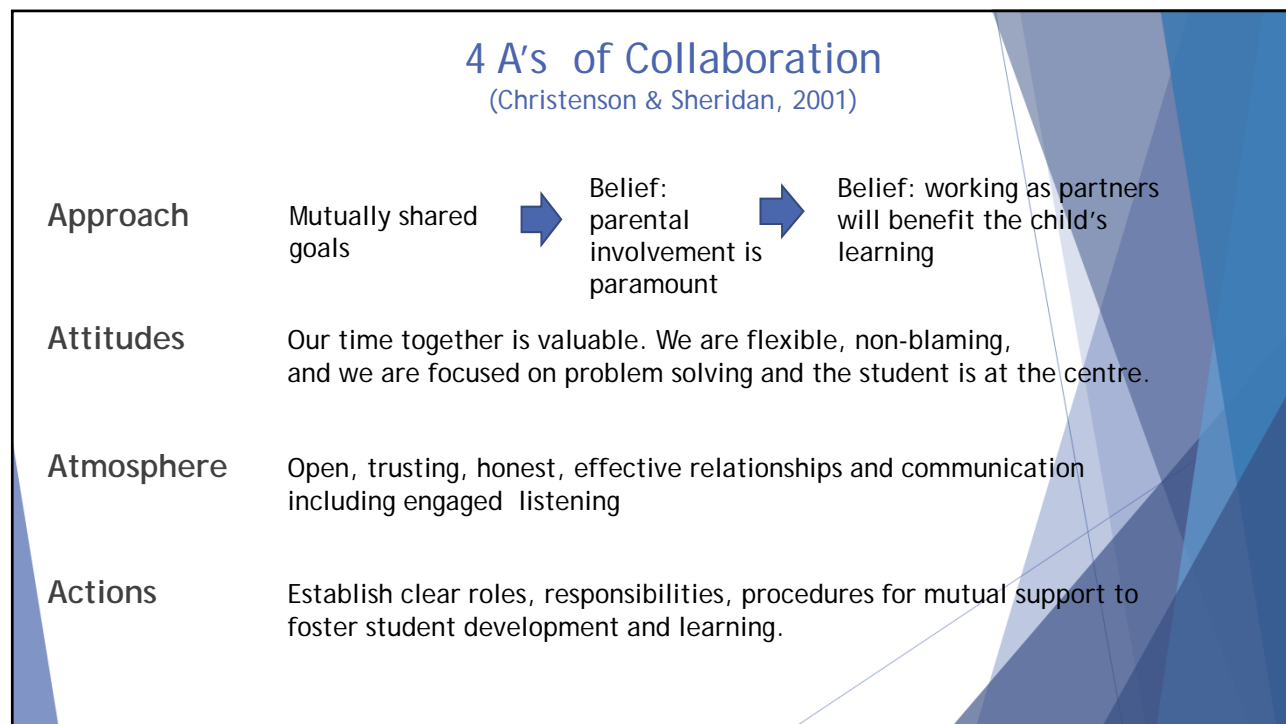
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Activity

What are the first things that come to your mind regarding these four aspects of collaboration between you and your child's school team?

- ▶ Approach
- ▶ Attitudes
- ▶ Atmosphere
- ▶ Actions

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Barriers to home/school collaboration

Personality differences

Money/Resources

Time

History

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Ways to Address a Personality Barrier

- ▶ Find someone at the school that you and your child can trust
- ▶ Offer as much positive support and resources that you can
- ▶ Remember this is only a one year commitment
- ▶ Don't be afraid to go up the ladder if need be
- ▶ Rely on the members of the team that you can work with

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How to Address the Money/Resources Barrier?

- ▶ Understand the way the funding works (school has limited resources)
- ▶ Understand that when the school wants to “designate your child” they are doing it to access additional time and resources
- ▶ If you feel that you need additional support, you can work with an outside agency so they can help advocate on your child’s behalf
- ▶ You have the right to explore other schools or other districts, but it is important to find out if the other options actually have what you are looking for

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Ways to Address the Time Barrier

- ▶ Be on time and help focus on the priorities
- ▶ Agree to a specific time frame, and stick to it
- ▶ Bring helpful people but remind them of the time frame
- ▶ Ask who will be at the meeting ahead of time so you know what areas to talk about and what questions to ask
- ▶ Plan another meeting day and time at the end of this one (easier to cancel than plan)

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How to Address History?

- ▶ Provide reminders to your child how they have progressed and learned over time
- ▶ Starting with a new teacher and classroom
- ▶ Take advantage of special programs or other district resources if they had not been provided previously
- ▶ You have the option to explore other schools if necessary

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How can we build bridges?

Main Takeaways:

- ▶ Strive for a balance between inform and advocate
- ▶ Motivation to work together positively
- ▶ Focus efforts on the best interest of the child
- ▶ Everyone does better if they feel appreciated and supported

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Your thoughts...

- ▶ Take a moment to jot down two ideas that you have thought of as a result of the discussion and information you have taken in over the last hour. In particular, think about some ideas regarding your next interactions with your school team.

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Questions & Review

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What do we mean by “Navigating the School System”?

A school system is:

- ▶ the way the individuals within schools are connected
- ▶ the policies and procedures by which they operate on a daily basis

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Why you need to know how to navigate the school system...

You work with the school system in many ways:

- ▶ IEP development
- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Transition planning

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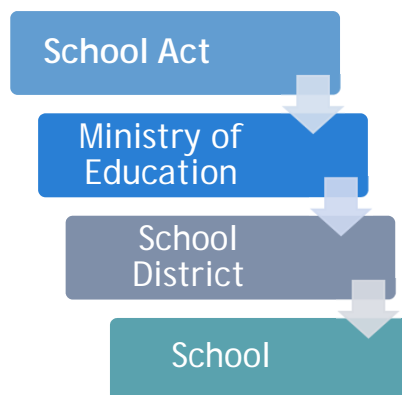
Discussion

Think about your experience with the school system, what has been a challenge to understand or to navigate?

- ▶ Are you clear about the roles of staff and administrators?
- ▶ Do you know where the decisions about programming for students come from?
- ▶ If policy guides practice, why do things look different across schools in the province for children with ASD?

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Hierarchy of Policy



- A policy using the word “must” is most powerful
- The words “may” or “should” make it a guideline rather than policy

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BC School Act

"...the purpose of the British Columbia School system is to enable all learners to develop their potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy..." (School Act, Preamble)

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Rights - The BC School Act

Access

- ▶ All school aged children have the right to access education

Information

- ▶ Parents/guardians have the right to be informed about their child's attendance, behaviour and progress in school.
- ▶ If you request, you may receive a copy of all your child's records.
- ▶ You may request and be given a copy of the School Plan.

(School Act, 1996)

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School Plans

Examples:

- ▶ SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 67
 - ▶ <https://www.sd67.bc.ca/District/Pages/School-Improvement-Plans.aspx#/=>
- ▶ SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 36
 - ▶ <https://surreylearningbydesign.ca/school-plans/>

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Rights - The BC School Act

Consultation

- ▶ You may consult with your child's teacher, principal, vice principal or director of instruction with respect to your child's education.
- ▶ If requested by the teacher, principal, vice principal or director of instruction you may need to consult

(School Act, 1996)

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Rights - The BC School Act

Appeal

- ▶ You have the right to appeal a decision that was made by a school board employee, which significantly impacts the education, health or safety of your child.

Confidentiality

- ▶ The information in a child's records must be confidential and the privacy of the child and family must be ensured by written procedures.

(School Act, 1996)

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BC Ministry of Education

Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies,
Procedures and Guidelines (April 2016)

Online:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindeergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf

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Your Child's District and School

- ▶ Spend some time on your school and school district websites.

Helpful information to look for:

- ▶ Special needs support
- ▶ School and District staff contacts
- ▶ School plan
- ▶ Parent Information brochures
- ▶ Parent involvement opportunities (PAC, volunteer events)

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Case Example

Discussion

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Education Assistants

Case example: "the EA should be creating more strategies in class for him"



Educational Assistant (Teacher's Assistant) Role:

- ▶ EA's play a key role in many programs for students with autism, performing functions which range from personal care to assisting the teacher with instructional programs
- ▶ Under the direction of a teacher, an education assistant may play a key role in implementing the program
- ▶ The education assistant may also assist in the collection of data for the purpose of evaluating student progress

(BC Ministry of Education. Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2016)

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Teachers

Case Example: "Frustration that the EA is only scheduled for 4 hours a week with Johnny, and hoping that the teacher will increase the EA hours."



Teacher Role:

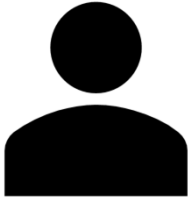
- ▶ Responsible for designing, supervising, and assessing the educational program for students with ASD
- ▶ Responsible for evaluating and reporting on the progress of the student

(BC Ministry of Education. Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2016)

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Principal

Case Example: what is the Principal's role in Johnny's school programming?



Principal Role:

- ▶ Responsible for the implementation of educational programs (School Act Regulation)
- ▶ Though planning occurs collaboratively, the principal of the school should ensure that for each student a case manager is appointed to co-ordinate development, documentation and implementation of the student's IEP.

(BC Ministry of Education. Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2016)

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Case Manager

Case Example: "The IEP should have already been developed by the Resource teacher/Case manager."



Case Manager Role:

- ▶ Responsible for coordinating a student's educational program.
 - ▶ development, documentation and implementation of the student's IEP.
- ▶ May be the learning assistance teacher, resource teacher, or another staff member assigned by the Principal.
- ▶ Liaises with parents and other staff involved
- ▶ Reviews student information to support planning for the IEP, School-based team meetings, referrals, etc.

(BC Ministry of Education. Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2016)

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Parents/Guardians

Case example: what is Johnny's mother's role in school planning?



Parent Role:

- ▶ Responsible for sharing information and knowledge with the school team
- ▶ Communicate with the teacher when things are going well and when they are concerns
- ▶ Have an understanding of school rules, policies, and procedures and be committed to partnership (flexible, reliable)

(BC Ministry of Education. Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2016)

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School Based Team" (SBT)

"A school-based team is an on-going team of school-based personnel which has a formal role to play as a problem-solving unit in assisting classroom teachers to develop and implement instructional and/or management strategies and to coordinate support resources for students with special needs within the school."

(BC Ministry of Education. Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2016, p. 14)

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District Level Supports

- ▶ Can look different across the province
- ▶ Referral required through School-based team
- ▶ Common examples:
 - ▶ Speech Language Pathologist
 - ▶ Occupational Therapist
 - ▶ Physiotherapist
 - ▶ Behavior Specialist
 - ▶ District Resource teacher
 - ▶ District Principal

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What we know so far...

We know:

- ▶ the principles of good collaboration
- ▶ the legislation for education in this province
- ▶ the policies that guide district and school planning
- ▶ The roles and responsibilities of school staff and parents

But what happens when there is a problem or conflict...

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Video Clip

Activity

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Discussion

The video provided an example of a concern and collaborative problem solving.

- ▶ What were the main issues of concern?
- ▶ What were the aspects of problem solving that were effective?
- ▶ If you have a concern regarding your child's school program, what are the main issues and what ideas could promote resolution to the problem?

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When a problem or conflict arises, what is the process?

Steps to follow:

1. Share the concern with the teacher through an informal chat, a formal meeting, or an email. Write a summary of the issue, list the steps already taken and stress the urgency of the matter.
2. After the response, follow up with an email summarizing the outcome of the meeting with next steps and a timeline.

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If you aren't satisfied...

3. If there is not a satisfactory resolution, speak to the School Principal next and include members of your school team and other relevant staff at the district level in emails. This may include District Principals, Learning Services or Student Support Services. Check your district website for this information.

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If that didn't resolve the matter...

4. A School District appeal to the Board of Education is an option when all the previous steps have been exhausted. All school districts are required to have an appeal policy and process in place.

Section 11(2) of the School Act says:

If a decision of an employee of a board significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student, the parent of the student or the student may, within reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision, appeal that decision to the board.

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Still not resolved?

5. If an appeal to the Board of Education does not resolve your concerns, you may appeal to the **Superintendent of Appeal**, *as long as the matter falls within the scope of the appeals regulation.*

Matters within the scope:

- ▶ Expulsion or suspension from an educational program;
- ▶ Distributed learning required as part of a disciplinary matter;
- ▶ A decision not to provide a student with an IEP;
- ▶ Consultation about placement of a student with special needs and the provision of an Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- ▶ Bullying behaviours; or
- ▶ Exclusion due to a medical condition that endangers others.

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Parent Advocacy Resources

- ▶ Autism Community Training (ACT)
- ▶ Family Support Institute
- ▶ Inclusion BC
- ▶ BCEdAccess

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Related Resources

- ▶ **Ombudsman**
 - ▶ Independent, impartial investigator of complaints about government administrative unfairness
- ▶ **The Human Rights Tribunal**
 - ▶ Responsible for accepting and resolving human rights complaints in a way that is fair to both parties
- ▶ **The Courts**
 - ▶ Requires consultation with a legal professional with expertise in the specific type of law required.

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Case Example

Activity

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Case Example

- ▶ Concerns?
- ▶ What steps should Johnny's mom take?
- ▶ Strengths to build from?
- ▶ What could be a positive outcome in this process?

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This brings us back to the
importance of collaboration
and relationships...

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The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

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What is an Individual Education Plan?

The IEP is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that summarizes and records the individualization of students' education program.

The IEP provides accountability

The IEP assists teachers to monitor progress

The IEP provides an ongoing record to assist with continuity in programming and transition planning

The IEP guides the implementation of learning support services inside or outside the classroom to align the educational program with the needs of the student.

(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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Adaptations

" **Adaptations** are teaching and assessment strategies especially designed to accommodate a student's needs so he or she can achieve the learning outcomes of the subject or course and to demonstrate mastery of concepts...A student working on learning outcomes of any grade or course level may be supported through use of adaptations. " (p.1)

(BC Ministry of Education. A Guide to Adaptations and Modifications, 2009)

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Modifications

- ▶ “Accommodations in the form of **modifications** are instructional and assessment-related decisions made to accommodate a student’s educational needs that consist of individualized learning goals and outcomes which are different than learning outcomes of a course or subject.” (p.3)

(BC Ministry of Education. A Guide to Adaptations and Modifications, 2009)

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Adaptations vs. Modifications

Review Decision Path

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Family Rights with the IEP

- ▶ Parents have the right to be consulted on:
 - ▶ the child's placement in school
 - ▶ the preparation of their child's IEP
 - ▶ receive a copy of the IEP
- ▶ Students should be encouraged to attend, especially at high school age.

(School Act, 1996)

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Tips to Foster Collaboration for IEP Development



DISCUSS WHAT
KINDS OF
COMMUNICATION
WORKS FOR YOU



ITS OKAY TO BE
NERVOUS



MAKE FAILURE OKAY



ASK QUESTIONS -
SHIFT AWAY FROM
ACCUSATIONS



GIVE AND REQUEST
FEEDBACK AT END
OF MEETING

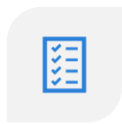
(Abraham, Gram & CCCPAC. Individual Education Plans: A Guide for Parents, 2014)

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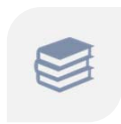
Key Features of Effective Meetings



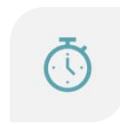
CLEAR
LANGUAGE



AGENDA



STUDENT
REVIEW



MEETING
MINUTES

(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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What must be in the IEP document?

The goals or outcomes for that student for that school year and/or

A list of support service required to achieve goals established for the student, and/or

A list of the adaptations to the educational materials, instructional strategies, or assessment methods

(Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2016)

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A Shift in the Framework for Learning

- ▶ BC's new curriculum includes "Core Competencies" which includes:
 - ▶ Communication
 - ▶ Thinking
 - ▶ Personal and Social

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Core Competencies- BC Curriculum

Communication

Personal and Social

- ▶ Positive Personal & Cultural Identity
- ▶ Personal Awareness & Awareness
- ▶ Social Responsibility

Thinking

- ▶ Creative Thinking
- ▶ Critical Thinking

BC Ministry of Education- Core Competencies:

https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/Core_Competencies_Posters.pdf

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The IEP Goals

Goals should correspond to the identified needs of the student for that year

Should include the students strengths

SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time limited

(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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SMART Goal

Specific: written in clear, unambiguous language

Measurable: allow student achievement to be described & evaluated

Achievable: realistic for the student

Relevant: meaningful for the student

Time limited: can be accomplished within a specified period

(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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Objectives



FOCUSED, SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE
STEPS TOWARD A GOAL



PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDANCE AND A
CLEAR BASIS FOR MONITORING
PROGRESS

(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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Strategies in the IEP

Strategies include:

- where the activity will take place, how often, and on what days
- who is the assigned staff that will work with the student

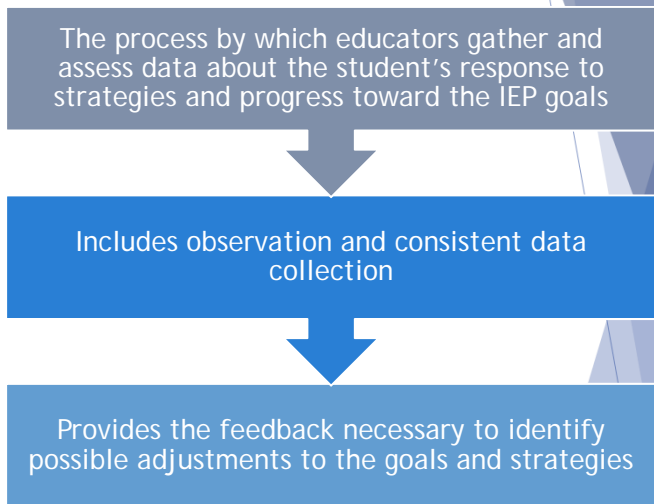
Strategies may also include:

- content for enrichment, adapting the learning environment to meet sensory or other needs, providing alternative approaches to instruction and evaluation, providing specialized services, and using adaptive technology

(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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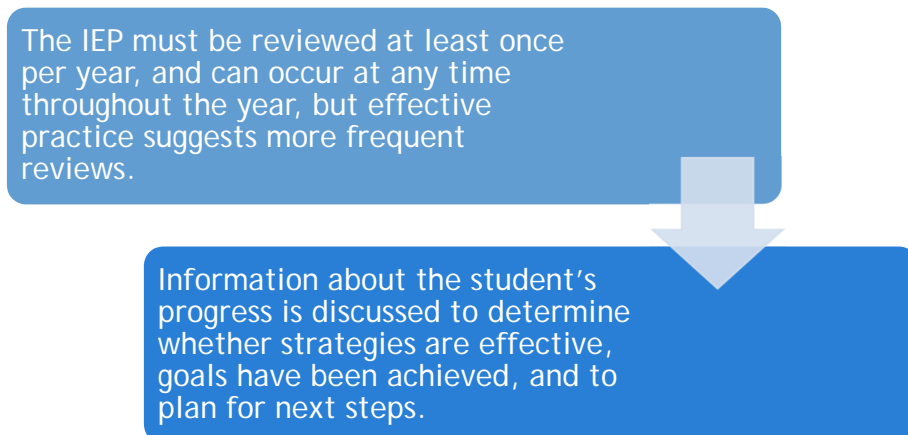
Monitoring



(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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The IEP Review



(Individual education planning for students with special needs: a resource guide for teachers, 2009)

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Case Example

Review:

Johnny is 6 years old, and in grade 1. He is diagnosed with ASD and has average cognition. His mom also describes him as highly anxious.

The teacher states that he has some difficulty with transitions, he can become very chatty about topics he is interested in which can be disruptive.

At school he is showing enjoyment during arts and crafts activities, library, and class-share activity time.

- ▶ Who should be at the IEP meeting for Johnny?
- ▶ What will support an effective IEP meeting?
- ▶ Ideas of priorities to focus on?

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Write one IEP goal for Johnny (think SMART goal!)

GOAL AREA:

By the end of the year, Johnny...

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	EVALUATION
By, Johnny will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher will develop... • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher will document.. • EA will ..

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Sample IEP goal

GOAL AREA:

By the end of the year, Johnny will

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	EVALUATION

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Competency Based IEP

- ▶ Main ideas:
 - ▶ Shifting from deficits to what CAN a student do (strength based perspective)
 - ▶ Core competency learning domains (Personal, Social, Intellectual)
 - ▶ Meaningful learning
 - ▶ Encourage student participation

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Competency Based IEP

Review
Student Services:
Competency Based Inclusive Education Plans (MyEducationBC)

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Components of Competency Based IEP

- ▶ My Interests
 - ▶ My Learning Preferences
 - ▶ What you need to know about me
- Both of these categories include:
- “I statements” from student perspective
 - ‘My team says” the school staff perspective

(MyEducationBC, Student Services: Competency Based Inclusive Education Plans)

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Components of Competency Based IEP

My Learning Profile

PERSONAL	SOCIAL	INTELLECTUAL
My strengths	My strengths	My strengths
My stretches	My stretches	My stretches

(MyEducationBC, Student Services: Competency Based Inclusive Education Plans)

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Components of Competency Based IEP

Support and Plans

- ▶ **Universal Classroom Supports** (e.g. daily schedule/visual, quiet spaces)
- ▶ **Essential Supports** (e.g. regular movement breaks, scheduled check ins to support teaching instructions for activities)
- ▶ **Supplementary plans** (e.g. Psychoeducational report, PBS plan)

(MyEducationBC, Student Services: Competency Based Inclusive Education Plans)

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Activity

Think about the core competency domains and develop one IEP goal for your child.

- ▶ Core Competency:
 - ▶ Goal:
 - ▶ Objective:
 - ▶ Strategies:
 - ▶ Evaluation:

BC Curriculum Core Competencies

Communication	Personal and Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Personal & Cultural Identity • Personal Awareness • Social Responsibility 	Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Thinking • Critical Thinking
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Takeaways from today

- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ Conflict resolution
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Clarity of information

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References

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