

**Holland Bloorview Kid's  
Rehabilitation Hospital**

**Navigating the  
Special Education System**

**Presenter: Alison Morse  
Easter Seals Ontario**

# Goals

1. To identify the parent role in the Identification, Placement and review Committee (IPRC) process and Individual Education Plan (IEP) development
2. To identify effective strategies for parent engagement in the IPCR and IEP processes

# Presentation Format

- ❑ The session is for two hours and questions are welcome
- ❑ If I can't answer your question today I will follow up with you after the workshop
- ❑ I will not take specific questions related to individual situations, although I may be able to talk to you after the end of the session, or by e-mail.

# Terms and Acronyms

- ▶ At each table, open the brown envelope and spread out the game pieces.
- ▶ Working as a team match the definition with the acronym.
- ▶ First team to complete all the matches wins a prize!

# Special Education Constantly Changing

- ❑ Sometimes feels like the system is rigid, however, special education is constantly changing.
- ❑ Special education funding has been increasing every year and exceeds \$2.7 billion
- ❑ Change has occurred in response to
  - ❑ Research and knowledge
  - ❑ Parent expectations
  - ❑ Changing and increasing student needs

# Parent Roles in Special Education

- ❑ Parent engagement for all parents includes supporting student at home and being involved in school activities
- ❑ Parents should be in regular communication with classroom teacher and address concerns as they arise
- ❑ Parent roles in special education include:
  - ❑ Case conferences or school team meetings
  - ❑ Development of Individual Education Plan (IEP), and
  - ❑ Participate in Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC) and annual reviews

# What do Parents Need to Know?

- ▶ About Your Child – Diagnosis, what it means, how it will impact school
- ▶ Your Child's Strengths – skills or interests that will help student learn
- ▶ Your Child's Needs – physical/health, learning or behaviour challenges
- ▶ The Special Education Process – what is an IPRC or IEP, the process at my school, where I can find information?

# IPRC and IEP

- ▶ Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) are both important and serve different purposes
- ▶ Presentation will discuss IPCR first although for many students IEP may occur first, and some school boards do not use IPCR process
- ▶ IPCR process is legislated through Regulation 181/98 and decisions may be appealed
- ▶ When a student is identified as exceptional the school board has a legal responsibility to meet the student needs
- ▶ IEP is a working document that is used to describe the student strengths and needs and the program that will be used to support the student

# Identification, Placement and Review Committee IPRC

- ❖ IPC Process is determined by Regulation 181/98 and the regulation includes the parents right to appeal the IPC decision, and outlines the appeal process
- ❖ Role of IPC is to determine:
  - Whether Student is Exceptional
  - Decide the Placement for the student
  - Consider the students strengths and needs
  - Identify any special education programs and services that may be required

# IPRC Process

- IPRC can be called by school staff or requested by parent in writing
- IPRC will consider student strengths and needs
- Principal required to develop Individual Education Plan (IEP) within 30 school days of IPRC or placement
- Parent asked to sign if they agree with IPRC decision on student identification and placement
- Parent may appeal if they disagree with decisions
- Appeal must be filed within 30 days of initial IPRC
- IPRC must be reviewed annually

# Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

- IPC does not usually occur in JK or SK but may be needed if child has significant needs and requires special supports
- IPC has legal status and is a formal meeting
- Parent **must** be invited to attend IPC
- IPC Committee usually includes Principal, Student Support Teacher or Learning Resource Teacher and others as invited
- IPC may involve school board system level staff for complex needs, or placement decisions
- *“Highlights of Regulation 181”* on Ministry website is a great plain-language resource for parents and professionals about the IPC process

# Categories of Exceptionality

- Behaviour
- Communication (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Learning Disability, Language or Speech Impairment)
- Intellectual (Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability)
- Physical (Physical Disability or Blind or Low Vision)
- Multiple Exceptionality (meets the criteria for more than one of above)

# IPRC Placement Options

- Regular class with indirect support
- Regular class with resource assistance
- Regular class with withdrawal assistance
- Special education class with partial integration
- Special education class full time
- Or Provincial School

Note: Some school boards may only identify placements as in regular class, or in a congregated class

# Parent Role in the IPRC

- ▶ May initiate IPRC with a written request to the Principal
- ▶ Must be invited to attend the IPRC and annual Reviews
- ▶ Must be provided with the school board Parent Guide for first IPRC
- ▶ Should attend and participate in the IPRC meeting
- ▶ May bring a representative or additional person for support to the meeting
- ▶ Will sign the Committee Statement of Decision if they agree with the decisions on Identification or Placement
- ▶ Must be provided a copy of the IEP within 30 days of the IPRC decision

# Parent Role in the Appeal

- ❑ May appeal the decision of Identification or Placement by notifying the Principal in writing within 30 days
- ❑ Will select one of the members of the Appeal Board
- ❑ May bring materials or individuals that can provide information relevant to the Appeal
- ❑ May bring a support person to the Appeal
- ❑ May object to the decision of the Appeal Board and take case to the Special Education Tribunal

# Building a Positive Relationship

Keeping the lines of communication open means that parents and teachers:

- do not hesitate to contact one another about a student's progress whenever it seems advisable to do so.
- are more willing to ask questions, offer opinions, and discuss options in an open and honest way
- avoid potential problems and resolve difficulties promptly when they arise.

(Shared Solutions Page 20)



# Preparing for a Meeting

- ▶ Parents invited to a variety of meetings including, Case Conference, Student Success, School Team or Program Development Team Meeting
- ▶ What do you need to know about the meeting?
  - Date and Location
  - Purpose of meeting
  - Who will be attending
  - What information you need to take with you
  - What questions you should ask
  - What will happen next



# At the Meeting

- ▶ Identify student's strengths and areas of success
- ▶ When determining the seriousness of a problem, ask how often it has occurred
- ▶ Determine what additional information may be required
- ▶ Decide on a plan or future action. Who does what when?
- ▶ Keep a record of the meeting
- ▶ Ask when you can meet again to review progress.
- ▶ Say thank you, or send a thank you note.
- ▶ Use the note to confirm next steps



# Active Listening



## ▶ Active Listening Strategies:

- Demonstrate that you are listening
- Explore issue and ask questions to find out more detail
- Restate the information to make sure you understood
- Clarify by telling what you understand is being said
- Summarize what has been said by the speaker

(Shared Solutions Page 29)

# Individual Education Plan

- ❑ What is an IEP?
- ❑ Individual Education Plan (IEP) helps teachers and other staff to understand your child's needs and provides a plan of how they can help the student to learn.
- ❑ Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan, "living working" document.
- ❑ IEP is based on assessment of student strengths and needs
- ❑ The IEP must be reviewed regularly and should change to reflect student progress.

# When Does a Student Need an IEP?

- ▶ A student **must** have an IEP if the student has been identified through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)
- ▶ An **IEP may be developed** if the student requires accommodations to access the curriculum; modifications to the grade curriculum; or an Alternative Program
- ▶ An **IEP is required** if student will require accommodations for Provincial testing (Grade 3 or 6 or Grade 9 Math and Grade 10 Literacy Test)

# Contents on an IEP



- **Student's strengths**
- **Student's needs**
- **Relevant test or assessment results**
- **Student's current level of achievement**
- **List of Accommodations required to access the curriculum**
- **Goals, specific learning expectations and assessment methods for a Modified or an Alternative Program**
- **Special education and related services**
- **Transition plan**

# IEP Program

- ▶ Reason for developing the IEP
- ▶ Student Profile
- ▶ IPRC information, including exceptionality, placement decision and most recent date
- ▶ Subjects or courses to which the IEP applies
- ▶ Elementary exemptions with rationale
- ▶ For secondary students, course substitutions and attainment goal, Ontario Secondary Diploma, Certificate or Certificate of Achievement

# Assessments

- ▶ IEP should include a brief summary of relevant assessments as well as the source and date of the assessment
- ▶ May include Educational Assessments, Professional Assessments from Speech-Language Pathologists or Occupational Therapists, Psychologists or Doctor
- ▶ Parents should check carefully to make sure the most recent assessment information is included
- ▶ In some cases a student may be waiting for a professional assessment and anecdotal or observational information may be noted. Lack of a professional assessment should not prevent the development of an IEP

# Student Strengths and Needs

- The IEP student strengths and needs are based on assessments or observations
- Direct link between the assessment information, the strengths and needs listed
- List student strengths for learning
- Usually select a few priority needs
- Some school boards use computer programs which generate need statements, goals and strategies. Computer software makes plan development easier.



# Strengths and Needs

- ▶ **Reading:** expressive language skills (writing), word recognition skills
- ▶ **Communication:** oral receptive/ expressive language skills, self-advocacy skills
- ▶ **Learning Skills:** organizational skills, listening skills, attention skills
- ▶ **Behaviour:** self-control skills, anger-management



# Accommodations

- **Accommodations** are the strategies, supports and/or services that are required in order for the student to access the curriculum and demonstrate learning.
- Accommodations do not alter the provincial learning expectations for the grade level.
- An accommodation may include a FM system for a child that is hearing impaired or the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) for a non-verbal child.
- Examples of Environmental/Instructional/Assessment accommodations on Page 29 of IEP Resource Guide (2004)

# Examples of Accommodations

- ▶ **Instructional**– Note taking Assistance; assistive technology, such as text to speech software; concrete/hands on materials; rewording rephrasing of information
- ▶ **Environmental** –Alternative work space; strategic seating; quiet setting; Assistive devices or adaptive equipment
- ▶ **Assessment** – Verbatim scribing; oral responses, including audio tapes; Assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software

(Page 29 of IEP Resource Guide (2004))

# Modifications



- **Modifications** refer to the changes made to the grade level expectations for a subject or course to meet the needs of the student.
- For core subjects, such as Math and Language, the expectations may be from another grade level (higher or lower).
- For content subjects, such as Social Studies or History, the modifications may include significant changes to the number and/or complexity of the learning expectations.

# Alternative Programs

- **Alternative Learning Expectations** refer to learning related to skill development in areas not represented in the provincial curriculum.
- The learning expectations represent a specific program or course taught to the student.
- For example, a Braille training program for a student who is Blind or Low Vision, Social Skills for students with Autism, or Self-Regulation for student with behaviour challenges



# Snakes and Ladders

- ▶ Each table has a snakes and ladders game and some cards.
- ▶ Each card describes the child's needs that may impact their ability to play the game.
- ▶ Decide what strategies will be necessary to enable everyone to play.

# Parent Role in IEP

## ❖ Parent role in IEP Development and Monitoring

- Parents can provide information about the child's strengths and needs, including relevant reports
- Parents can provide information on strategies that help the child at home
- Parent to sign and provide feedback on the Parent Consultation form
- Parents can monitor the IEP implementation and provide feedback on what is working or creating challenges

**Note: Principal is responsible for IEP development and for signing finished document**

# Ministry of Education Role

## ► Ministry of Education:

- Regulates Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, including Appeal Process (Regulation 181/98)
- Regulates role of Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) (Regulation 464/97)
- Provides Program Standards for Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- Establishes Standards for Special Education Plans/Reports (submitted annually by each school board)
- Establishes processes for Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement

# Parent Roles in Special Education System Advocacy

- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Minister's Advisory Council on Special education (MACSE)
- Provincial Parent Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC )

# Easter Seals Ontario

- ▶ Primary program is financial assistance with cost of personal equipment for children and youth with mobility needs
- ▶ Operate two summer camps and provide funding for individuals to attend summer programs
- ▶ Funding is individualized for costs not covered by Assistive Devices Program (ADP), or insurance
- ▶ Manage the provincial Incontinence Support Grants



# Easter Seals SEAC Program

- ▶ Provincial Coordinator – Special Education supports network of SEAC members
- ▶ Recruits for SEAC Volunteer Program
- ▶ SEAC representatives on 17 school boards
- ▶ SEAC terms December 2014 – 2018
- ▶ Looking to partners, CTC staff and therapists to increase awareness of SEAC Volunteer Program



# Easter Seals Ontario Resources

- ▶ Easter Seals Kids at School Website:
- ▶ <http://education.easterseals.org/>
- ▶ Provincial Coordinator – Special Education
- ▶ Alison Morse
- ▶ E-mail: [amorse@easterseals.org](mailto:amorse@easterseals.org)
- ▶ Phone: 416-421-8377
- ▶ Easter Seals SEAC Members
- ▶ (Contact Alison for more information)

# Special Education Resources

## Key Ministry of Education Resources

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html>

- Regulation 181/98 For the Identification, Placement and Review Committee Process
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) A Resource Guide (2004)
- Planning Entry to School A Resource Guide (2005)
- Shared Solutions A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Students with Special Education Needs (2007)

## School Board Resources:

- Parent Guide to the IPRC
- Special Education Report
- Program Brochures or Guides

# Resources at Holland Bloorview

- ▶ For the Online Family Resource Centre:  
<http://hollandbloorview.ca/ClientFamilyResources/FamilyResourceCentre>
- ▶ For more free workshops and events for families:  
[www.hollandbloorview.ca/familyevents](http://www.hollandbloorview.ca/familyevents)
- ▶ To meet other family members and join our ASD or CP Parent Talks, contact **Lori Beesley** at [lbeesley@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:lbeesley@hollandbloorview.ca)
- ▶ To speak with someone about resources for your family, contact **Melissa Ngo** or **Lorraine Thomas** at [mngo@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:mngo@hollandbloorview.ca) or [lthomas@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:lthomas@hollandbloorview.ca)
- ▶ To sign up for the Family Resource Centre newsletter, email [resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca)
- ▶ Visit the Family Resource Centre on the first floor of Holland Bloorview from 8am–5pm!

# **Education Law Project**

**&**

# **Medical Legal Partnerships**

## ***Bridging the Justice Gap***

Addressing the Legal Problems Impacting Children's  
Health or Family's Capacity to Care for Child

Presenter: Hannah Lee

# GETTING LEGAL ASSISTANCE

## PROBLEM

- ▶ High legal fees
- ▶ legal aid services
- ▶ lack of expertise
- ▶ uneven playing field

## SOLUTION

- ▶ Education Law Project:
  - To address unlawful conditions that keep children out of school and away from special education services

...at Holland Bloorview

# Education Law Project

## Who:

- Volunteer lawyers
- PBLO Training
- Province-wide
- income eligible
- Client of Holland Bloorview and others

## What:

- information and summary advice,
- coaching and negotiating
- Drafting correspondence
- Representing children at meetings and hearings

## How:

Hannah Lee, Triage Lawyer  
PBLO at Holland Bloorview Kids  
Rehabilitation Hospital

Tel: 416-425-6200 ext 6557  
Wed & Thurs 9:00 to 12:30  
pm  
[hannah.lee@pblo.org](mailto:hannah.lee@pblo.org)

PBLO Education Law Project at  
Law Help webpage

[https://www.lawhelppontario.org/  
legal-help-for-  
children/education-law-  
project/](https://www.lawhelppontario.org/legal-help-for-children/education-law-project/)

...at Holland Bloorview

# KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

- Mandatory referral to IPRC by principal
- right to attend IPRC
- Mandatory annual review of IEP, consultation
- IEP Appeal and internal review mechanisms
- Mandatory access to “appropriate” programs and services
- ▶ Human rights: right to equality and freedom from discrimination,
- ▶ duty to accommodate
- ▶ Best interests of child
- ▶ Individual needs
- ▶ Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario

Procedural Rights

Substantive Rights

# OTHER Resources

- ▶ **Justice for Children and Youth**
  - ▶ 415 Yonge Street, Suite 1203
  - ▶ Toronto, Ontario
  - ▶ Tel: 416-920-1633
  - ▶ Toll Free: 1-866-5329
- ▶ **ARCH disability Law Centre**
  - ▶ 425 Bloor Street East, Suite 110
  - ▶ Toronto, ON
  - ▶ M4W 3R4
  - ▶ Tel: 416-482-8255
  - ▶ Toll-Free: 1-866-482-2724
  - ▶ TTU: 416-482-1254
- ▶ **Human Rights Legal Support Centre**
  - ▶ el: (416) 597-4900Toll Free: 1-866-625-5179TTY: (416) 597-4903TTY Toll Free: 1-866 612-8627
- ▶ **Private Lawyer:** Glenn Stuart, Stuart Law
  - ▶ 416-861-0873

## Pro Bono Law Ontario at Holland Bloorview (MLPs)

- ▶ To improve health status of economically and/or socially disadvantaged
- ▶ Non-medical problems that impact on child's health or a family's capacity to care for child
- ▶ On-site Triage lawyer
- ▶ Free Legal assistance
- ▶ Referral from clinician or staff
- ▶ Income-eligible
- ▶ More than education law-related issues: ie employment, ODSP, ACSD, immigration, housing, estate planning, consent and capacity, guardianship and powers of attorney,

# Conclusion

- ❖ **Parents need to be informed about:**

- Student strengths and needs
- Special Education resources and processes
- Parent Role in the IEP and IPRC
- Parent's Rights and Responsibilities
- Effective Advocacy Strategies

**Parents can work with educators to support student success:**

- By sharing their extensive knowledge of the child
- As the liaison which links all of the service providers
- Parents and educators can partner their skills and knowledge to build dynamic and appropriate programs for exceptional students.

- ❖ **Parents can influence the education system through:**

- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

# Questions??

- ❖ **Contact Information:**

- Alison Morse e-mail to [amorse@easterseals.org](mailto:amorse@easterseals.org)

- ❖ **Easter Seals Website:** [www.easterseals.org](http://www.easterseals.org)

- ❖ **Ministry of Education Website:** [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

**Thank You!!!**