

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

This guide contains information for parents and caregivers to support their child's transition to school.

INFANT AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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York Region

PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION FROM HOME TO SCHOOL



The following information explains how Infant and Child Development Services (ICDS) supports you and your child in preparing for school, ensuring a smooth and successful transition. Transition planning starts the year before school begins and continues throughout the year with support from your Early Interventionist.

SUPPORTING PARENT LEARNING AND CONNECTION

ICDS staff will support you by connecting you with helpful resources and information in your community to assist with your child's transition to school. There may also be opportunities for parents to come together to share experiences and ideas. Your Early Interventionist will let you know about these opportunities as they become available.

Topics may include:

- Transition to school process
- Funding resources
- Summer camps and recreation programs
- Life after Early Intervention Services

The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) host information evenings about their special education services and programs, which your Early Interventionist will also inform you about.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S TRANSITION TO SCHOOL



Starting school is an exciting milestone, and every child experiences it differently. Your Early Interventionist is here to help you find strategies that suit your child's unique needs. Together, you can explore the ideas below and decide which ones may be helpful to include in your Family Service Plan.

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION

- Help your child feel comfortable playing and talking with other kids and adults.
- Plan fun outings to places like parks, libraries, or EarlyON Child and Family Centres to give your child more chances to meet and play with other children.
- Explore summer camps, recreation programs, or preschool options to help your child get used to new routines and environments.
- Think about how your child communicates their needs—whether through words, gestures, or expressions—and help them build on those skills.
- Encourage your child to develop coping skills that help them manage everyday situations.

SCHOOL ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES

- Keep a regular daily routine at home, like consistent wake-up, meal, and bedtime schedules, while gently encouraging your child to try new things.
- Help your child get ready for school by slowly adjusting home routines to match the school schedule, such as earlier wake-up and meal times.
- Give clear, simple directions and gently guide your child to follow through.
- Organize toys and materials so your child can make choices on their own and learn to tidy up afterward.
- Try using school-like materials at home—such as child-sized chairs, scissors, crayons, playdough, and puzzles—so your child gets familiar with what they might see in a classroom.
- Visit the school playground or nearby play areas to help your child feel more comfortable in a school-like setting.
- Practice the trip to school, whether walking or taking the bus, and encourage your child to carry their own backpack.
- Read books and sing songs about going to school and riding the bus. A great example is *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn.

SELF-HELP / INDEPENDENCE

- Create a special spot for toys, coats, and shoes, and help your child learn to put things away after using them.
- Hang a hook at your child's height so they can hang up their coat by themselves.
- Give your child time to play independently with familiar toys and activities. Start with short periods and gradually increase the time.
- Use simple reminders—like words or pictures—to help your child know when it's time to switch from one activity to another.
- Practice toileting routines —like pulling pants up and down, wiping, and washing hands.
- Let your child's teacher know about any equipment your child uses or may need at school.
- Encourage your child to sit at the table for snacks and meals, just like they will at school.
- Practice opening and closing containers, lunch bags, backpacks, and water bottles.
- Help your child learn to pack and unpack their backpack.
- Practice putting on and taking off coats, shoes, and boots.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL TIMETABLE



For the York Catholic District School Board and York Region District School Board.

Planning ahead can help make your child's transition to school easier.

TRANSITION ACTIVITY	WHEN *timelines are approximate*
Your Early Interventionist will meet with you to discuss the transition to school process and complete the "Notification of Support Needs for a Child Transitioning to School" document and sign a consent form. The consent form gives permission for information about your child's support needs to be shared with the school board(s) of your choice, to help prepare for your child's transition to school.	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.	December (year before school entry)
School boards schedule a transition meeting with you to discuss your child's special education needs. If the school board transition meeting has not been scheduled by the end of March, you may contact the principal of your child's home school to inquire. You may invite your Early Interventionist or any other professionals working with your child to attend if you would like support at this meeting.	January – March
You and your Early Interventionist review the Family Service Plan to make sure it includes transition to school goals/outcomes.	January
School registration opens and parents register their child at their home school.	January
School boards host special education information evenings for parents.	January/February
Parents attend a transition meeting with the school board.	March – June
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.	July - August
If your child is attending an after school program, your school age provider can submit the **Inclusion Support Services Consultation Request Form** to access supports for their program as needed.	September

SPECIAL EDUCATION OPTIONS



A range of special education options and supports may be available through local school boards and private schools. Learning about these supports and asking questions can help families explore what options may work best for their child.

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (YCDSB)

» **ycdsb.ca**

Visit the Student Services/Special Education page for the following:

- Parent's Guide to Special Education (available in **English** and can be requested in other languages)
- 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 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 page 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)
- Special Education Funding for Assistive Devices Technology and Equipment for Children with Special Needs
- A Communication Guide for Parents and Students

For students unable to attend school for medical or social emotional reasons, review the following document for **Home Schooling Guidelines for Parents: Satisfactory Instructions at Home**

FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD (VIAMONDE)

» **csviamonde.ca**

Visit the Student Services page for the following:

- 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

Autism Ontario Program

» **ontario.ca/Autism**
- Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

W. Ross Macdonald School for the Deaf and Blind

» **wrms.pdsbnet.ca**
- Deaf/blind Resource Services at the W. Ross Macdonald School provides consultative services for pre-school and school aged children up to the age of 21, residing within the Province of Ontario
- Resource consultants available to work with blind/visually impaired and deaf/blind students

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf

» **sjw.pdsbnet.ca/Home**
- Provides education for students from junior kindergarten to grade 8 with American Sign Language and English as the primary communication languages of student

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf

» **ecd.pdsbnet.ca**
- Offers a wide range of programming for students aged four to 21

York Hills Centre for Children, Youth and Families

» **yorkhills.ca/services/day-treatment**
- Day treatment program for ages four to 12 years
- Programs set up in conjunction with ongoing therapeutic and medical care

Bloorview School Authority at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

» **bloorviewschool.ca**
- Individualized education programs set up in conjunction with ongoing therapeutic and medical care

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AGE SIX AND ABOVE



The following is a list of organizations that offer services that may be appropriate to support your child and your family in the future. Please visit the provided websites for more information.

AUTISM ONTARIO PROGRAM

» **ontario.ca/Autism**

CANADIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND (CNIB)

» **cnib.ca/en/Programs-And-Services?region=on**

CHILDREN'S TREATMENT NETWORK (CTN)

» **ctnsy.ca**

COMMUNITY LIVING YORK SOUTH

» **communitylivingyorksouth.ca**

FAMILY SERVICES YORK REGION

» **fsyr.ca**

JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILD – THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE (FRC)

» **jfandcs.com**

YORK HILLS CENTRE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

» **yorkhills.ca**

YORK SUPPORT SERVICES NETWORK

» **yssn.ca**

MACKENZIE HEALTH - CENTRE FOR BEHAVIOUR HEALTH SCIENCES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

» **mackenziehealth.ca/Programs-Services/Mental-Health/Centre-For-Behaviour-Health-Sciences**

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

» **childdevelopmentprograms.ca/resource/best-start-ontarios-maternal-newborn-and-early-child-development-resource-centre/**

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

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)

» **ontario.ca/Page/Special-Education-Advisory-Committees**

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S STORYBOOK

These free digital resources were created to spark conversation, ease worries and help children feel ready for their first big day;

- Welcome to Kindergarten" Storybooks - Heartwarming stories that gently walk children through what to expect at school - making friends, meeting teachers and exploring their classroom.
- Interactive Activity Book - A playful, parent-child resource filled with colouring, drawing and reflection activities that encourage young learners to talk about their feelings, routines and hopes for kindergarten. This activity book is available in PDF format for easy printing
- These books are available in PDF and ePub formats.
- You can find these exciting new resources at **ontario.ca/Kindergarten**

Please speak to your Early Interventionist if you have any questions about this guide.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

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)**.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES
york.ca/Children

York Region

26-553-007