

THE ACADEMIC LIFE OF A DISABLED CHILD

GUIDE FOR PARENTS



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The content of this publication was compiled and written by the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec.

This document is available in adapted media upon request.

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OFFICE'S SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC

The mission of the Office is to help increase the social participation of disabled persons. To this end, it has been assigned powers and duties accordingly, including those of informing, advising and supporting disabled persons, their families and their loved ones. Furthermore, under Article 26 of the *Act*, the Office may, at the request of a disabled person, make representations and assist them in their dealings with ministries, public bodies, municipalities, school service centres, school boards, educational institutions, and insurance companies and establishments to ensure that they can exercise their rights. It should be noted that the latter are obliged to collaborate with the Office in the exercise of the functions conferred on it (article 26.4).

The Office's services cover all areas of the school, professional and social life of disabled persons within the meaning of the *Act*. More specifically, the services it offers the public consist of:

- Receiving requests for information relating to disabled persons;
- Identifying needs and providing appropriate information on measures, programs and services promoting the educational, professional and social integration of disabled persons;
- Where necessary, direct the person to the organization best able to meet their needs and provide follow-up;
- Advise and assist, on request, a disabled person, their family and friends in their dealings with the authorities to help them clarify their needs and obtain the appropriate services;
- Assist and/or represent a disabled person in dealings with the responsible bodies in the context of one or more intervention plans;
- Assist the disabled person, their family or loved ones in their dealings with service providers and make representations, if necessary.

To obtain services or for help with the procedures

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DEFINITIONS

Disabled Person

Article 1(g) of the *Act* defines a disabled person as:

“any person with an impairment resulting in a significant and persistent disability and who is likely to encounter obstacles in carrying out everyday activities.”

You can read the [Act](#).

Disabled Student

According to Article 1 of the *Education Act* (LIP), a student is disabled if they correspond to the definition in paragraph g) of Article 1 of the *Law*.

A disabled child within the meaning of the *Law* will, in principle, be considered as a disabled student or a student with social, emotional or learning difficulties (EHDAA) in the school system.

You can read the [LIP \(Education Act\)](#).

FOREWORD

The Office considers that education should be inclusive, i.e. it should reflect the diversity of students. The ordinary class in the local school, with the necessary adaptations and support, should be considered the preferred place for the schooling of students with disabilities.

However, the Office does not claim that all children should be integrated into ordinary classes. If after an individualized assessment of the child's academic and social needs and abilities and the development of an intervention plan considering all reasonable accommodations allowing integration into a regular classroom it is shown that this integration is not in his or her best interest, other forms of schooling may then be considered to meet his or her needs. The same applies if it is shown to constitute undue hardship, for example, if it significantly infringes on the rights of other students.

This approach respects the spirit of the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (Charter)*, the LIP, the *Act*, the Special Needs Education Policy and the legal rules and principles arising from case law on inclusive education.

LIST OF INITIALISMS AND ACRONYMS

CDPDJ	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse
CHARTER	<i>Charter of human rights and freedoms</i>
ECDC	Early Childhood Development Centre
EHDA	Students with disabilities or with social or learning difficulties
LEP	<i>Act respecting private education</i>
LIP	<i>Education Act</i>
Act	<i>Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration</i>
NSOA	<i>Act respecting the National Student Ombudsperson</i>
MEQ	Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec
QEP	Québec Education Program
SWT	Transition from school to working life

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INTRODUCTION

This document has been designed to inform parents¹, support them in their thinking and assist them in their actions relating to the educational success and school career of their disabled child of preschool, primary or secondary age, whether they are enrolled in a mainstream class, a special class² or a special school.

It offers information on the school environment and the actions to be taken with a view to the schooling of a child or at all stages of his or her academic life to general education for young people. It presents the choices and possibilities available to parents. It describes the steps to be taken and prepares them for the role they will have to assume. It also offers resources and references that may be useful to them in their efforts.

This document is an update of a previous publication. Some sections have been amended in line with legislative and administrative changes adopted in recent years, for example, regarding school governance.

The information presented in the following pages is, to the best of the Office's knowledge, up to date at the time of publication, as of 2024. However, it should be noted that the school context is constantly evolving. This document is intended as an overview. It cannot be considered complete, nor can it replace official sources, to which it is still important to refer to obtain the most recent and complete information.

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1. For the purposes of this document, "parent" means the holder of parental authority or, unless the latter objects, any other person who has been delegated one or more attributes of parental authority with regard to the student or child (custody, supervision, education or maintenance).
2. We can also talk about specialized classes, adapted classes or, in some schools, small groups.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Integration in Mainstream Classroom

The integration of a disabled student into a mainstream classroom can be defined as the physical and social integration of that student into a mainstream classroom in a local school. This means that they have access to the same facilities and are part of the same group as other children who do not necessarily have any particular disabilities or difficulties.

BENEFITS

Integration into a mainstream classroom can, insofar as it is in the student's best interest, have advantages, including:

- Allowing the student to be in the most inclusive school environment possible;
- Taking into account the student's differences and special needs;
- Allowing the student to attend the same school as siblings and friends;
- Encourage stimulation by peers and other pupils in the group;
- Make other children aware of his special needs as well as his abilities and aptitudes;
- Encourage tolerance and acceptance of differences in the school environment;
- Encourage their self-esteem;
- Act positively on their motivation at school;
- Prepare them to take their place in society.

Starting school is an important event for you and your child. It is quite normal to have some apprehensions and to feel some anxiety about this step. As a parent, it is in your interest to be informed about your child's academic life, as important decisions will have to be made to enable your child to approach it successfully.

There is a lot of information on the subject. We suggest that you read it and discuss it with those around you or with parents who have had similar experiences with their children.

For more information, you can read the following government publications:

- [Lignes directrices pour l'intégration scolaire des élèves handicapés ou en difficulté d'adaptation ou d'apprentissage](#)
- [Politique de l'adaptation scolaire](#)

We suggest that both parents discuss their expectations regarding their child's integration into school. What do you want for your child? Consider their strengths and needs as well as the services available at the school.

To help you in your decision, you can use the document entitled *My child's Profile* in appendix. This document will serve as a checklist that you can refer to confirm that your choice or the options available to you still correspond to your objective.

There are several schooling options, but whatever your choice, it is essential that it is in your child's best interests. Each child is unique and any decision concerning them should take their particularities into account.

Integration into a mainstream classroom is not always the preferred option. Many children with disabilities attend special classes or specialized schools.

The Office will respect your decision and support you, regardless of the chosen schooling environment.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

You can be supported by a disability integration advisor from the Office in the process of enrolling your child in school?

Quebec School System for Preschool, Primary and Secondary School Children

As a parent, the Office encourages you to be actively involved in your child's educational success throughout his or her school career. It is important that you assert your child's needs and take part in decisions that concern him or her. To do so, it is useful to familiarize yourself with the organization of the school system to know who to contact or in which instances you can participate.

The Québec public school system is mainly governed by the *Education Act*. Three structures form the basis of this system: the school, the school service centre or school board and the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ).

School

The school has a very important mission, namely, to educate, socialize and qualify students within the framework of an educational project, all in accordance with the principle of equal opportunities. It must enable students to undertake and succeed in their academic life (LIP, article 36). The school is governed by a governing board and must hold an annual parents' meeting.

School Board

Each year, the school must set up a governing board made up of an equal number of parents and staff members (*Education Act*, Article 43). "The School Board has important functions and powers that give educational institutions the leverage they need to meet the needs of all students. It is therefore a school governance body at the local level where the members, together with the school administration, have the opportunity to exchange, guide and make decisions in the best interest of all the students of the school, with a view to ensuring their educational success" (MEQ).

The School Board analyzes the situation of the school, mainly the needs of the students, the issues related to their success, and the characteristics and expectations of the community it serves. Based on this analysis and taking into account the school service center or school board's commitment-to-success plan, it adopts the school's educational project, sees to its implementation, and conducts its periodic evaluation (*Education Act*, section 74). Each year, the governing board informs the parents and the community served by the school of the services it offers and reports on their quality. (LIP, article 83).

To learn more, you can read the following document:

- [Pouvoirs d'un conseil d'établissement, ses rôles et collaborateurs.](#)

Annual General Meeting of Parents

The general meeting of parents is compulsory and must take place during the month of September. The chair of the school board or the school management determines when the meeting will be held and informs the parents in writing (*Education Act*, article 47). This meeting is important, as it is one of the only opportunities for parents of children attending the school to get together. The members of the school board are also elected at this meeting.

Check the information in your child's school bag or on the school website to find out when this meeting will take place.

Anti-Bullying and Violence Action Plan

The school board approves the anti-bullying and anti-violence plan and its updates proposed by the school management (*Education Act*, article 75.1). It conducts an annual evaluation of the school's results regarding the fight against bullying and violence (*Education Act*, article 83.1).

DID YOU KNOW THAT

- Bullying is defined as “any behavior, speech, action or gesture, whether deliberate or not, of a repetitive nature, expressed directly or indirectly, including in cyberspace, in a context characterized by an imbalance of power between the persons concerned, with the effect of causing feelings of distress and harming, injuring, oppressing or ostracizing” (LIP, article 13, paragraph 1.1);
- Violence is defined as: “any manifestation of force, whether verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual, intentionally directed against a person, with the effect of causing feelings of distress, of hurting, injuring or oppressing that person by attacking their integrity or their psychological or physical well-being, their rights or property” (LIP, article 13, paragraph 3).

The main objective of this plan is to prevent and counter any form of bullying and violence against a student, teacher or any other member of the school staff. It must include several aspects, for example, an analysis of the school's situation, preventive measures, the procedures applicable for reporting or to make a complaint about an act of intimidation or violence and measures to encourage parental cooperation (LIP, article 75.1).

To find out more, visit the following Web page: [Bullying at school](#).

School Board and School Service Center (Commission scolaire et centre de services scolaire)

IMPORTANT

In 2020, a reform of school governance in Quebec led to the transformation of most school boards into school service centers. However, it is important to mention that nine English-language school boards and two school boards with special status remain and still have elected commissioners. Some of the rules mentioned below therefore differ depending on whether it is a school board or a school service center.

To find out more about the differences between the school boards and the school service centers, you can read the following document: [Tableau comparatif: commission scolaire et centre de services scolaire](#).

There are also private schools that are governed by the *Act respecting private education* (LEP).

A school board brings together public schools as well as vocational training centers and adult education centers. It is responsible for distributing material, human and financial resources within its territory.

A school service center also brings together public schools as well as vocational training centers and adult education centers. It has a mandate to support and assist schools within its territory.

According to the MEQ, “the mission of the school service center is to establish educational establishments in its territory, to support and assist them by making goods and services available to them and by offering them optimal conditions enabling them to provide students with quality educational services and to ensure their educational success, with a view to achieving a higher level of education, socialization and qualification of the population.”

Each school board or school service center must adopt a **policy relating to the organization of educational services for students with special needs** (LIP, article 235). This policy must comply with the guidelines of the MEQ.

You can obtain this policy from your school board or school service center.

This policy must provide for:

- The methods for assessing the needs and abilities of students with disabilities, special needs or learning difficulties, with the participation of parents and the student, if capable;
- The methods for integrating these students into regular classes and school activities;
- The methods for grouping these students in specialized schools or classes;
- The methods for developing and evaluating intervention plans.

School Board*

***IMPORTANT**

The information presented in this section only concerns the school boards.

Currently, the *Regulation concerning the application to English-language school service centers of provisions of the Act mainly amending the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance* offers a reprieve for the application of the new provisions of the LIP with regard to the governance of English-speaking school boards, by virtue of *Decree 1077-2021* of August 4, 2021, (2021) G.O. 2, p. 5055.

The articles of law mentioned therefore refer to the old version of the *Education Act* (between November 7, 2019, and February 7, 2020).

For more specific questions about school boards, please contact the Ministère de l'Éducation.

Council of Commissioners

Every school board is administered by a Council of Commissioners (*Education Act*, section 143).

The territory of a school board is divided into several sectors, each of which is represented by a commissioner. The Council of Commissioners is composed as follows:

- Eight to 18 elected citizens, including a chairperson;
- Three Commissioners or, if the number of Commissioners exceeds 10, 4 Commissioners representing the Parents' Committee, including at least 1 chosen from each of the following groups:
 - Representatives of schools providing elementary education;
 - Representatives of schools providing secondary education;
 - Parents of handicapped students or students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

If all the members of the Council of Commissioners mentioned so far deem it appropriate, a maximum of two co-opted commissioners may also come from groups that are most representative of the region's social, cultural, business and labor communities (*Education Act*, section 143). The latter do not have voting rights (*Education Act*, section 148), nor does the school board's Director General, who attends meetings of the Council of Commissioners (*Education Act*, section 144).

To be eligible for election as a commissioner, a person must be domiciled in the territory of the school board and not be in one of the situations of ineligibility provided for in section 21 of the *Act respecting school elections* (chapter E-2.3) (*Education Act*, section 145).

Among other things, the Council of Commissioners approves the budget for special needs services (EHDA).

A student affected by a decision of the Council of Commissioners, the Executive Committee, the Governing Board or the holder of an office or employment with the school board, or the parents of such a student, may ask the Council of Commissioners to review the decision (*Education Act*, section 9).

School Service Center*

*IMPORTANT

The information contained in this section concerns school service centers only.

Board of Directors

A school service center is administered by a Board of Directors, whose purpose is to ensure sound management of public funds, while ensuring that its establishments benefit from optimal conditions for carrying out their educational mission.

Board members exercise their functions and powers with a view to improving the educational services provided under the *Education Act*.

Their roles include:

- Ensuring that adequate support is provided to schools and centers;
- Ensuring the relevance and quality of the educational services offered by the school service center;
- Ensuring the effective and efficient management of the human, material and financial resources available to the school service center;
- Carrying out any mandate entrusted to them by the Board of Directors of the school service center, on the proposal of the Chair, to inform the members of the Board on any particular matter (*Education Act*, article 176.1).

To find out more, you can visit the following Web page: [Conseils d'administration d'un centre de services scolaire](#) (School Service Center Boards of Directors).

A School Service Center is managed by a Board of Directors made up of the following 15 members (*Education Act*, section 143):

- Five parents of a student attending an institution under the jurisdiction of the School Service Center who are also members of the parents' committee, each representing a district;
- Five members of the center de services scolaires staff, including a teacher, a member of the non-teaching professional staff, a member of the support staff, a principal of an educational institution and a member of the guidance staff;
- Five representatives of the community living in the territory of the School Service Center who are not members of the center's staff.

***IMPORTANT**

To simplify the text for the remainder of this document, the term "school organization" will be used to designate both a school service center and a school board, unless otherwise specified.

Parents' Committee

The *Education Act* requires every school organization to set up a Parents' Committee.

The functions of the Parents' Committee (*Education Act*, section 192) include:

- Proposing to the school organization means to support parents' agreement to promote their child's educational success, as well as means to promote communications between parents and school staff (this provision applies only to school service centers, since it is one of the additions of the *Act to amend the Education Act*);

- Promoting the participation of parents in the activities of the school organization and, to this end, to designate parents to participate in the various committees;
- Transmitting to the school organization the expression of parents' needs identified by the school representatives and by the representative of the Advisory Committee on Special Needs Services;
- Giving its opinion on any matter likely to ensure the best possible functioning of the school organization, as well as on any matter on which it must be consulted.

This committee is composed of the following persons (LIP, article 189):

- One representative from each school, elected by the parents' assembly;
- One representative from the Advisory Committee on Services for Special Needs (EHDA).

Advisory Committee on Services for Special Needs Children (EHDA)

The school organization must also set up an advisory committee for special needs services, also known as the special needs committee (*Education Act*, section 185).

In a **school board**, the EHDA committee (*Education Act*, old version, article 187) can give its opinion on:

- The policy for organizing educational services for students with special needs;
- The allocation of financial resources for services to these students;
- The school board's commitment to success;
- The application of the intervention plan to a student with special needs (EHDA).

In a **school service center**, the EHDA committee (*Education Act*, section 187) can give its opinion on:

- The policy for organizing educational services for students with special needs;
- Allocation of financial resources for services to these students;
- The commitment to the success plan;
- Application of the intervention plan to a student with special needs (EHDA).

The EHDA committee of a school organization is composed of (*Education Act*, section 185):

- Parents of students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities;
- Representatives of teachers, non-teaching professionals and support staff;
- Representatives of organizations that provide services to students with special needs;
- A school principal.

You could be a member of your school's institution council, the parents' committee or your school organization's special needs committee. Members are elected at the beginning of the year at the annual general meeting of parents.

It's possible to attend committee meetings. For more information, contact your child's school.

Resource Allocation Committee

The school organization must set up a resource allocation committee (*Education Act*, sections 193.2, 193.3). This committee must set up a consensus-building process that allows it to obtain the necessary information on the needs of different communities to establish the objectives and principles of the annual distribution of revenues. In addition to complementary educational services, the committee may also consider the distribution of other professional services. Following this consultation, it submits recommendations to the school board's council of commissioners or to the school service center's board of directors.

The Resource Allocation Committee is made up of a maximum of 15 members, including the Department General or Director General of the school organization that heads it. The majority of members must be school and center principals, including at least one principal:

- Of a preschool or elementary school;
- Of a secondary school;
- Of a center.

The person responsible for educational services for students with special needs must also be a member of this committee.

Ministère de l'Éducation

The MEQ's functions include adopting measures to contribute to the training and development of individuals, making sure that educational institutions are developed and ensuring the quality of educational services provided by educational institutions.

The Ministère's mission

To offer, throughout Quebec, living environments that are conducive to educational success and to the regular practice of physical activities, sports and recreation, living environments that are inclusive, healthy and respectful of people's needs and conditions.

It develops and proposes policies to the government in its areas of competence. It plays an important role in the education of disabled children.

For example, the **Special Education Policy** is designed to help students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties to succeed in terms of education, socialization and qualifications. Its fundamental orientation, which must guide any intervention in the field of special education and mobilize all partners, is defined as follows:

“To help students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities to succeed in terms of instruction, socialization and qualification. To this end, we must accept that educational success can take different forms depending on students’ abilities and needs, and we must provide the means to promote this success and make sure it is recognized.”

This policy is backed up by **an action plan** that proposes concrete ways of working with special needs children.

All students must follow the **Quebec Education Program (QEP)**³. Through this program, Quebec schools aim to help young people succeed in their personal, academic and professional life projects. Designed to provide a common basic education, the program is based on the development of students’ competencies, i.e., the effective use of their knowledge to carry out real-life tasks and activities. In fact, it allows the school to help students cope with changes in society and encourages them to play an active role in their own learning.

To find out more, you can read the [Québec Education Program \(Programme de formation de l’école québécoise\)](#).

There are also educational **programs for students with moderate to severe or profound intellectual disabilities**. These programs are designed specifically to meet the needs of these students. Their use is not compulsory. The choice of program should be based on the student’s needs and abilities, as part of the intervention plan.

To find out more, visit the following web page: [Study Programs](#).

Financing and Service Organization

You may have already heard of the difficulty code. The difficulty code is administrative information that was used by the MEQ to determine the funding allocated to each school organization for the organization of services for special needs children.

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3. Except in the case of a change in expectations in relation to QEP requirements. For more details, see pages 41 and 42 of this document.

IMPORTANT

As this document is being updated, the MEQ is currently working on reviewing the funding method for services provided by school organizations to students with special needs. This should involve replacing the difficulty code with another formula. During the transitional period, however, the difficulty code may still be used in the school network, as it is associated with several budgetary rules.

For further information, please refer to the Difficulty Code section in the appendix.

The budget allocated to a school organization is the same for all the children with special needs in that organization. There is therefore no pre-determined amount in this overall budget to meet the individual needs of each child separately.

However, it is important to note that the organization of educational services for handicapped students must be based on an individualized assessment, i.e., in response to the needs and abilities of each student. The implementation of preventive measures or adapted educational services must not be established on the basis of belonging to a category of difficulty, nor on the basis of the funding methods used by the MEQ, but rather according to this assessment of the needs and abilities of each student.

For more information, please consult this document: [L'organisation des services éducatifs aux élèves à risque et aux EHDAA](#).

Educational Services

Educational services offered to students include preschool education, primary and secondary teaching services, complementary services and specific services.

Preschool education and primary and secondary educational services are governed by the Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education (hereinafter referred to as the Basic School Regulation).

You can read the [Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education](#).

Preschool Education

Preschool education is aimed at four- and five-year-olds. Its aim is to promote the child's all-round development, through the acquisition of attitudes and skills that will facilitate success in school and in life. Among other things, it allows them to develop motor and social-emotional skills, communication abilities and an understanding of the world around them. At the end of preschool, children make the transition to primary school.

Primary Education Services

The purpose of primary education services is to allow students to develop their full potential and integrate into society through fundamental learning that will contribute to the progressive development of their autonomy and give them access to the knowledge offered in secondary education (Basic School Regulation, article 2). They develop the knowledge, skills and social abilities that will be useful throughout their schooling.

At the elementary level and at the end of the first year of secondary school, the school administration may, exceptionally, in a student's best interest, allow him or her to remain in the same class for a second year if, according to the student's individualized education plan, this measure is the most likely to facilitate the student's academic progress. This measure may be used only once during elementary school and must not have the effect of allowing the student to transfer to secondary school after more than six years of elementary school, subject to the principal's authority, at the end of this period, to admit the student to elementary school for an additional year in accordance with the Act (Basic School Regulation, section 13.1).

Secondary Education Services

Secondary education services allow students to pursue their full development, foster their social integration and facilitate their personal and professional orientation. They complete and consolidate the student's basic training with a view to obtaining a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) or other qualification, and, where applicable, pursuing higher education (Basic School Regulation, article 2). Among other things, they allow students to develop their social and professional identity.

Employment-oriented training path

For secondary school students heading for the job market, there is a job-oriented training pathway offering two types of training: Formation préparatoire au travail (Work preparation training) and Formation menant à l'exercice d'un métier semi-spécialisé (Work preparation training Training leading to the exercise of a semi-skilled occupation). According to the MEQ, "In the context of the diversification of pathways offered to students, the employment-oriented training pathway provides young people experiencing academic difficulties with the opportunity to continue their schooling in different backgrounds and using an adapted pedagogy, and to obtain an official certificate attesting to a qualifying training program that prepares them for the job market".

To find out more, visit the following web page: [Information documents on the Work-Oriented Training Path](#).

Before your child finishes high school, work with him or her teachers and other school staff to prepare for the transition to post-secondary education or working life.

Before your child finishes high school, it's important to work with him or her and the teaching staff to prepare for the transition to post-secondary education or working life. (For more information, see page 44).

Additional Services

Complementary services (Basic School Regulation, articles 3 to 5) are designed to help students progress in their different learning areas. They are offered to all students and aim to provide them with an optimal school environment that makes sure they succeed. They are offered as a complement to preschool, primary and secondary education services. They are divided into four programs:

- **Support services** are designed to make sure that students have the conditions they need to learn;
- **Assistance services** are designed to support students in their academic progress, in their educational and vocational orientation, and in their search for solutions to the difficulties they encounter;
- **School life services** aim to develop students' autonomy, sense of responsibility, moral and spiritual dimension, interpersonal relationships and sense of belonging to the school and community;
- **Promotion and prevention services** aim to provide students with an environment conducive to the development of healthy lifestyle habits and skills that have a positive impact on their health and well-being.

The following services are among the complementary services that may be offered to students (Basic School Regulation, article 5):

- Promoting student participation in educational life;
- Education in rights and responsibilities;
- Sports, cultural and social activities;
- Support for the use of school library resources;
- Educational and vocational information and guidance;
- Psychology;
- Psycho-education;
- Special education;
- Orthopedagogy;
- Speech therapy;
- Health and social services;
- Spiritual animation and community agreement.

In addition to these services, the student may also receive occupational therapy services, although this is not mentioned in article 5 of the Basic School Regulation.

Specific Services

Specific services are offered only to students who, for particular reasons, must receive French-language reception and support services, or home or hospital teaching services (Basic School Regulation, Section 6).

Home or hospital teaching services are intended for students who are unable to attend school because they require specialized health care or social services. The purpose of these services is to allow the student to pursue the objectives of the programs of study, despite his or her absence from school (Basic School Regulation, Section 8).

Obligation to Attend School

Under the *Education Act*, every child who is a resident of Quebec must attend school from the first day of the school calendar of the school year following the one in which he or she reaches the age of 6, until the last day of the school calendar of the school year in which he or she reaches the age of 16, or at the end of which he or she obtains a diploma awarded by the Minister, whichever comes first (*Education Act*, section 14).

He or she is entitled to various educational services until the age of 18, or 21 if he or she is a handicapped person within the meaning of the *Act* (*Education Act*, section 1).

Exemptions

According to the *Education Act*, section 15, a child is exempt from the obligation to attend school if the child:

- Is exempted by the educational authority because of illness or to receive medical care or treatment required by his or her state of health;
- Is exempted by the educational authority, at the request of his or her parents and after consultation with the advisory committee on services for special needs children, because of a physical or mental handicap that prevents him or her from attending school;
- Is expelled from school by the educational authority under section 242 of the *Education Act*⁴;
- Receives appropriate home schooling that meets the conditions set out in the *Education Act*, as well as any other conditions determined by the Minister;
- Attends an institution governed by the *Education Act* or an institution whose educational system is the subject of an international agreement within the meaning of the *Act respecting the Ministère des Relations internationales*;
- Attends a vocational training center or receives instruction in a company that meets the conditions determined by the Minister.

The student's school calendar includes the equivalent of a maximum of 200 days, **at least 180 of which must be devoted to educational services** (Basic School Regulation, article 16).

Unless one of these exceptions applies, your child must attend school from age 6 to 16. If your child is not attending school when he or she should, a report may be made to the Director of Youth Protection. The school administration writes a report after notifying the parents in writing (LIP, article 18).

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4. *Education Act*, section 242, paragraph 1: A school body may, at the request of a school principal, for just and sufficient cause and after giving the student and his or her parents an opportunity to be heard, enroll a student in another school or expel him or her from its schools. In the latter case, the principal must report the matter to the Director of Youth Protection.

Preschool Education

Preschool education for 4- and 5-year-olds is not compulsory. However, it does allow children to prepare for school integration.

“The preschool education program-cycle, for children in kindergarten aged 4 and 5, aims to foster the overall development of all children and establish preventive interventions to meet their needs. Play is at the heart of learning. Children learn through play, which allows them to express themselves, experiment, structure their thinking and develop their vision of the world. They also cultivate the pleasure of learning.”

4-year-old kindergarten is being rolled out gradually, so it's not yet available in all Quebec schools. You can contact your local school to find out if it offers this service.

A child with a disability or living in an economically disadvantaged environment, who has reached the age of 4 before October 1 of the current school year, and for whom the parents have made a request, is admitted to pre-school education. (Basic School Regulation, article 12).

To find out more, visit the following web page: [Kindergarten for 4-Year-Olds](#).

For students with disabilities and students from low-income families attending 4-year kindergarten, the week includes **a minimum of 11 hours and 45 minutes** devoted to educational services, unless the school organization, under conditions determined by the Minister, has exempted them from this requirement. (Basic School Regulation, article 17).

For students attending 5-year-old kindergarten, the week includes **a minimum of 23 hours and 30 minutes** devoted to educational services. (Basic School Regulation, article 17).

Preschool students receive **a minimum of 50 minutes daily for lunch**, in addition to the time prescribed for educational services. (Basic School Regulation, article 17).

Primary Education

If a child reaches the age of 6 before October 1 of the current school year, he or she must be admitted to elementary school (Basic School Regulation, article 12). From this age onwards, education is compulsory.

For elementary school students, the week includes **a minimum of 25 hours** devoted to educational services (Basic School Regulation, article 17).

Every day, elementary school students are entitled to **a minimum of 50 minutes for lunch**, in addition to the time prescribed for educational services. They also benefit from a relaxation period in the morning and another in the afternoon, each lasting **a minimum of 20 minutes**. (Basic School Regulation, article 17).

At the elementary level, the school administration may, exceptionally, in the best interests of a student, allow him or her to remain in the same class for a second year if, according to the school's intervention plan, this is the most likely to facilitate the student's progress at school. (Basic School Regulation, article 13.1).

Secondary Education

For secondary school students, the week includes **a minimum of 25 hours** devoted to educational services. They have a minimum of 50 minutes for lunch and at least 5 minutes between each teaching period. (Basic School Regulation, article 18).

You can consult the [Basic School Regulation](#) for pre-school, primary and secondary education.

Roles of Different School Staff

A number of stakeholders, whose roles are essential and often complementary, work within the school to support students' success in their academic careers.

Some services may not be available at all schools.

As a parent, you may be called upon to collaborate with certain school professionals depending on your child's needs. It's a good idea to be aware of their roles, so you can understand the help your child could receive at school and get a better overview of the environment in which he or she is evolving. These people can be present during the development of your child's **intervention plan**.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

You may be accompanied and supported by an Office consultant in the integration of people with disabilities at meetings to develop your child's **intervention plan**?

Below is a list of the school's stakeholders and a brief description of their respective roles.

In the appendix, you'll find a tool that may be useful in compiling a list of the stakeholders and partners involved in your child's schooling, along with their contact details.

School Management

The school administration is responsible for the school's human, material and financial resources. They have a major influence on school life in general. Among other things, it supports and advises the teaching and professional staff, or any other person working in the school and supports the institution's council. The principal oversees the implementation and periodic evaluation of the disabled student's individualized education plan, and keeps parents informed on a regular basis. It must establish a good working relationship between the school, parents and the community.

Permanent Teaching Staff

The student's classroom teacher plays a very important role. In particular, they make sure to develop a good relationship with the student and to create an environment conducive to integration. They are attentive to any difficulties the student may be experiencing, and keep parents regularly informed of his or her progress. The teachers adapt their teaching and sometimes their assessments and apply the means selected as part of their intervention plan.

Specialist Teaching Staff

Teachers usually specialize in a single subject, such as art, music, English or physical education. They must be sensitive to the student's needs and adapt their interventions. They communicate with the student's regular teaching staff to make sure the student's learning and behavior are monitored and inform parents of the student's progress, mainly at report card meetings.

Orthopedagogy Staff

Orthopedagogical staff detect, identify and evaluate learning difficulties or disorders at school. They provide support to teachers, parents and other school staff. They plan interventions and educational activities to help students in difficulty. They may work with students individually or in small groups. They sometimes intervene directly in the classroom.

Psycho-Education Staff

Psycho-education staff work with students who have adjustment or behavioral difficulties. They provide screening, assessment and support to help these students and their teachers. They may meet with students individually or in small groups. They may also visit the classroom to observe or lead activities aimed at developing students' social skills.

Psychology Staff

Psychologists screen, prevent and assess problems related to students' learning, motivation, behavior or general development. They collaborate with school staff, parents and school partners to ensure that the needs of students are met.

Speech Therapy Staff

Speech-language pathologists specialize in human communication. They assess and treat language disorders, teaching students ways and strategies to improve their communication. They organize individual or small-group sessions to help students with this disability. They also help children who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

Occupational Therapy Staff

Occupational therapists specialize in student development. They identify and analyze the causes of specific difficulties affecting classroom functioning. These may include coordination and dexterity problems in writing activities, difficulties in recognizing letters caused by visual problems, difficulties in recognizing shapes or difficulties in planning gestures to carry out a task. They work with students to help them develop their skills and meet the demands of everyday school life.

Technical Staff in Special Education

Technical staff in special education, also known as special educators, work with students who show a disability or have difficulties adapting to or learning. They develop skills that help students integrate into the group. They may support students in class, help them with daily tasks and intervene in the event of behavioral problems or crises. If they work in the classroom, they work closely with the regular teaching staff.

Staff Responsible for Disabled Students

The staff in charge of handicapped students support them in their daily tasks at school. Among other things, they help them get around, take care of their hygiene and make sure they are comfortable and safe. They are aware of their needs and inform the school staff of these needs.

Visual Interpretation Staff

Visual interpreters work mainly with students who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. They are present in the classroom and accompany students in their daily tasks.

Their role is to communicate the message of the student with a hearing impairment to the other students using speech, or to transmit the communication of the other students to the person with a hearing impairment using sign language.

Individuals in Charge of Daycare Services

The individuals in charge of daycare services has an important role to play in daycare operations. Among other things, they ensure that operating rules are known and respected. They coordinate human, financial and material resources. They work with the school administration, registering students and informing parents of any particulars affecting their child.

Guidance Council Staff

Guidance councillors are mainly present at the secondary school level. They help students choose an educational profile that suits their aptitudes, tastes and interests.

Guidance personnel can play an important role in your child's transition from school to work.

Educational Council Staff

The educational advisor staff provide information and support to school staff in the areas of learning assessment, classroom management and teaching methods.

Special Education Advisory Staff

The special education advisory staff act as a resource for parents and school staff. They coordinate all the services offered to disabled students.

Regional Expertise

In some regions of Quebec, resource persons from regional special education support and expertise services, specialized according to different clientele, form a team whose mandate is to support school organizations and schools.

These resource persons offer support, guidance and training services for working with students with specific needs. They do not work directly with students and their parents, but with the staff of educational organizations.

To find out if such expertise exists in your region, you can ask your educational organization.

Rights and Obligations

To support your child in his or her educational development, it is important that you know your rights and your child's rights. It is also useful to have some knowledge of the duties and obligations of teaching staff, the school management and the school organization.

Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms

According to the Charter:

"Everyone has the right to the recognition and exercise, in full equality, of the rights and freedoms of the individual, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, color, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap.

Discrimination occurs when such a distinction, exclusion or preference has the effect of destroying or compromising this right."(Quebec Charter, Article 10)

"Everyone has a right, to the extent and according to the standards provided by law, to free public education." (Quebec Charter, article 40)

Children's Rights

All children have the right, according to the LIP and the Basic School Regulation:

- A Pre-school education from the age of 4, primary education services and secondary education services up to the age of 21, if recognized as belonging to the category of "disabled student" (LIP, article 1 and Basic School Regulation, article 12);
- To the other educational, complementary and specific services offered by the school organization (LIP, article 1);
- To participate in the development of his or her intervention plan, if capable of doing so (LIP, article 96.14);
- To have any decision concerning him or her taken in his or her best interest (LIP, articles 64, 71).

According to Article 33 of the *Civil Code of Québec*: Decisions concerning the child must be made in his interest and with respect for his rights. In addition to the moral, intellectual, emotional and physical needs of the child, his age, health, character, family environment, including the presence of domestic violence, including conjugal violence, or sexual violence, as well as other aspects of his situation, are taken into consideration.

Parents' Rights

Parents have the right:

- To choose, each year, from among the schools offering the services to which they are entitled, the one that best meets their preferences (LIP, articles 4 and 239);
- To receive information on learning and behavior (Basic School Regulation, article 29);

- To consult all personal files concerning their child and to have inaccurate or incomplete information corrected (*Civil Code of Québec*, articles 38 to 40, *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information*, articles 83 and 94);
- To be members of the governing council of the school attended by their child if they are not members of the school's staff (LIP, article 42);
- To be informed annually by the governing board of the services offered by the school and their quality (LIP, article 83);
- To participate in the development of their child's individualized education plan (LIP, article 96.14);
- To be consulted when the school organization plans to enter into an agreement with another school organization for the organization of services to be offered to the student (LIP, article 213);
- To be heard by the school organization before their child is enrolled in another school or expelled from their school (LIP, article 242).

Rights of Separated Parents

Even if custody of a child is awarded to one of the parents, the other parent retains the attributes parental authority. This includes the right to supervise the child's upbringing and participate in decisions unless, of course, the court decides otherwise. In the event of difficulties regarding the exercise of parental authority, either parent may apply to the Superior Court, which will rule in the child's best interests after encouraging conciliation between the parties (*Civil Code of Québec*, articles 604 and 605).

Teachers' Obligations

According to article 22 of the LIP, teaching staff are obliged:

- To contribute to the intellectual formation and integral development of the personality of each student entrusted to him/her;
- To collaborate in developing a love of learning in each student entrusted to him/her;
- To take appropriate steps to help develop respect for human rights in students;
- To act in a fair and impartial manner in dealing with students;
- To take the necessary steps to promote the quality of written and spoken language;
- To take appropriate measures that allow him/her to attain and maintain a high degree of professional competence;
- To collaborate in the training and support of future teachers at the beginning of their careers;
- To comply with the school's educational project;
- To take part in at least 30 hours of continuing education activities every two school years (*Education Act*, section 22. 0.1). (For the moment, this provision applies only to school service centers).

Teachers' Rights

According to the LIP, article 19, teachers have the right:

- To determine the conduct of each group of students entrusted to him/her;
- To adopt teaching methods that correspond to the needs and objectives set for each group or each student entrusted to him/her;
- To choose assessment instruments for the students entrusted to him/her.

Obligations of the School Management

Under the *Education Act* (section 96.14), the school principal is obliged to:

- Establish an individualized education plan adapted to the student's needs, with the help of the parents of a student with special needs, the staff providing services to the student and the student himself, unless the student is unable to do so;
- Ensure that the student's individualized education plan is implemented and periodically evaluated, and that parents are regularly informed;
- Indicate the possibility of resorting to the treatment procedure provided for in the *Act respecting the National Student Ombudsperson* (NSAPA) in the event of dissatisfaction on the part of the parent or student.

Obligations of the School Organization

Under the *Education Act*, the school organization is required:

- To set up an advisory committee on services for students with special needs (*Education Act*, section 185);
- To approve, on the recommendation of the Student Success Commitment Committee, a plan of commitment to success that is consistent with the strategic directions and objectives of the Ministère's strategic plan (*Education Act*, section 209.1);
- To ensure that each of its institutions provides a safe and healthy learning environment so that every student attending can develop his or her full potential, free from any form of intimidation or violence (*Education Act*, section 210.1);
- Promote the implementation of each school's educational project (*Education Act*, section 218);
- Establish by regulation, after consultation with the Parents' Committee, a procedure for examining complaints related to its functions (*Education Act*, section 220.2);
- Adapt educational services to students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities according to their needs, based on an assessment of their abilities (*Education Act*, section 234);
- Adopt, after consultation with the advisory committee on services for students with special needs, a policy on the organization of educational services for students with special needs (*Education Act*, section 235).

When a school organization wishes to collect or communicate personal information under the *Act respecting access to documents held by Public bodies and the protection of Personal information*, it must, with certain exceptions, obtain consent (sections 53, 53.1 and 59 of the Act):

- From the parent or guardian of a minor under 14 years of age;
- From a minor aged 14 or over, a parent or guardian.

For example, unless otherwise stipulated by the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*, the school organization must obtain parental consent for professional staff to carry out an evaluation of their child, or for their child's personal files to be shared with an institution belonging to another school organization.

School Organization Rights

In particular, the school organization has the right:

- To sign an agreement, for the provision of preschool education and elementary and secondary instructional services, with another educational organization or institution governed by the *Education Act* or an educational organization in Canada that provides educational services equivalent to those covered by the *Education Act* (*Education Act*, section 213);
- To sign an agreement with another educational organization, agency or person for the provision of complementary and specific services or for purposes other than the provision of preschool and elementary and secondary educational services (*Education Act*, section 213);
- Eequire from its educational institutions any information or document it considers necessary for the exercise of its functions and powers (*Education Act*, section 218.1);
- Make sure the Basic School Regulation established by the government is applied (*Education Act*, section 222);
- Make sure the programs of study established by the Ministère are applied (*Education Act*, section 222.1).

Material and Technological Resources

There is a government measure for the purchase of material resources for preschool, elementary and secondary students who show specific needs.

This is measure 30810 – Adaptation scolaire (Règles budgétaires pour les investissements pour les années scolaires 2021-2022 à 2023-2024 (gouv.qc.ca)) (Special education (Budgetary rules for investments for the school years 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 (gouv.qc.ca))).

This measure allows the school organization your child attends to provide the material and technological resources he or she needs at school and at home as part of his or her schooling.

The measure is divided into two sub-measures:

- Sub-measure 30811 – Purchase of adapted furniture or equipment
This sub-measure targets disabled students aged 4 to 21 enrolled in general youth education. It covers the purchase of furniture, equipment, appliances and materials to compensate for the student's limitations at school. Without these tools, the student's participation in educational activities at school would be impossible or seriously compromised. This sub-measure may also, to a lesser extent, cover delivery, installation, maintenance and repair costs.
- Sub-measure 30812 – Accessibility to information and communication technologies. Although this sub-measure is aimed at all students with special needs enrolled in general youth education, it must be used as a priority to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Its purpose is to fund the acquisition of technological tools that meet the student's learning and communication needs at school and, where possible and relevant, at home. In the context of sub-measure 30812, the provision of technological tools corresponds to an accommodation measure considered as an essential adjustment allowing the student to overcome or mitigate an obstacle to learning and assessment. The decision to implement such an accommodation (technological tools) is based on an analysis of the student's situation within the framework of the individualized education plan.

Eligibility Criteria

- The analysis of the student's needs is carried out within the framework of the intervention plan and demonstrates that the recommended material is an appropriate response to the student's needs.
- The tools are used primarily by the student.
- The equipment must facilitate the student's participation in the school's educational activities.
- The equipment must be removable, so that it can follow the student to another school.
- The measure is not intended to meet all the needs of students with special needs, and the school organization may purchase the same type of equipment from its current budgets.
- The measure is not intended to meet needs covered by other organizations, programs or services.

Equipment Ownership and Transfer of Ownership

The school organization is the owner of the equipment purchased under measure 30810. When a school or school organization changes, the equipment follows the student. In the event of a change school organization, ownership of the equipment is transferred to the school organization receiving the student. Where applicable, delivery charges are paid by the receiving school.

The equipment follows the student for as long as he or she is enrolled in a school organization, including vocational training or adult general education, provided that the student is continuing his or her studies and that the equipment is still appropriate to meet his or her needs. When the student leaves the public school system, the equipment is made available to other students of the school organization.

School Transportation

Your school will determine whether or not special arrangements need to be made for your child's daily transportation to and from school. It is therefore important to inform the school administration when registering your child if he or she has a disability.

The school authorities generally provide a transport service for children who cannot use regular transport because of their disabilities. This transport may be by adapted bus or taxi, depending on the child's degree of mobility and the choice of means of transport made by the school authorities. In some cases, a companion may be required. This service is provided to the student under certain conditions. In addition to these services, educational establishments may also pay the student directly an amount intended to cover all or part of their transport costs (LIP, article 299). In this case, parents must make sure the child travels themselves or find a third party to do so.

The transportation of students organized by an educational establishment, for daily entry and exit from classes, is free of charge. Where this transport is provided under contract with a public transport organization or with a holder of a bus transport permit, within the meaning of a government regulation, a school organization may claim from the student the part of the cost of a pass that corresponds to a service additional to that necessary for daily entry to and exit from classes (LIP, article 292).

In the event that the school organization in the student's territory is not able to offer him or her the educational services to which he or she is entitled under the LIP and recommends that parents enroll the student in a specialized school outside the territory, the parents should not have to pay for transportation to the other school (insofar as the school organization offers school transportation under the LIP, articles 291 and 292).

In the event that parents choose a school for their child in a school organization other than the one located in the territory in which they reside, their regional school organization is not, in principle, obliged to pay the costs of school transportation.

The school organization that organizes the midday transportation to allow pupils to go home for dinner may claim the cost from those who choose to use it (LIP, article 292).

For more information, you can consult your school organization's website or contact the MEQ customer service department by telephone on 1 866 747-6626 (Toll free).

Transport Advisory Committee

The LIP stipulates that schools organizing school transport for students must set up a transport advisory committee (LIP, article 188 and see also the *Regulation respecting student transportation*). This committee gives its opinion on the planning, coordination, financing and management of student transportation, as well as on the transportation organization plan and the procedures for awarding transportation contracts. You can obtain information from this committee.

School Childcare Services

The daycare services generally look after students who attend the educational services of the same school. They can sometimes also look after pupils from another school or disabled pupils who are educated, under an agreement, in a specialized private school.

At the beginning of the year, the school will give you a document describing the rules of operation of the after-school care service.

It is important to ask the school care service staff to inform you of any situation involving your child or any behavior of the child requiring specific attention, as well as the school management or teaching staff, so that the best possible services can be offered to your child.

To facilitate the integration of students with specific needs in daycare services, the organization *Intégration sociale des enfants en milieu de garde* offers a personalized on-site support and council service. The organization travels to most regions of Quebec.

Additional Allowance

The MEQ determines and pays an additional allowance to school daycare services that take in students with special needs. The amount of the allowance varies according to the attendance of the disabled student at school.

Opening Hours

School childcare services are offered to all students on all school days as per the school calendar. They are available outside of class hours, i.e. in the morning, if necessary, at lunchtime and in the evening after school. In general, school childcare services are open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

School daycare services can also be open all day, particularly during pedagogical days, during spring break and in the event of a storm.

School Childcare Service Fees

School childcare services must be self-financing from government grants and the financial contribution of parents. The financial contribution required of parents must under no circumstances exceed the fixed amount per day of childcare for a regularly enrolled child. On school days, this contribution includes a service provision that generally does not exceed five hours of childcare, including the period of support for schoolwork. On pedagogical days, this contribution includes a service provision not exceeding ten hours of care.

A reasonable additional contribution, established according to the real additional costs, may be requested from parents for additional hours to the basic services, in particular for students who attend daycare services for a daily period of more than five hours on school days or more than ten hours on pedagogical days.

The maximum parental contribution does not cover the children's food requirements. Additional charges may be made, if necessary, for meals and snacks. Special activities during pedagogical days, such as educational and recreational outings, may also require an additional parental contribution. In all cases, this additional parental contribution must be reasonable, taking into account the actual costs of the activities.

To find out more about childcare services in schools, you can consult the following government pages: [Childcare services provided at school | Ministère de l'Éducation](#) and also the [Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school](#).

Supervision Services for Disabled Students Aged 12 to 21

In some regions, supervision services are offered for disabled students aged 12 to 21 who cannot stay at home alone outside of school hours. This program, which falls under the responsibility of the Ministère de la Famille, offers financial support to organizations that make sure these services are provided and aims to offer disabled students safe supervision services that meet their needs and interests. It also aims to offer parents of disabled children favorable conditions for employment or continuing their education by supporting their work-life balance.

For any assistance or information regarding these services, you can contact the Information Service of the **Ministère de la Famille** by telephone on 1 855 336-8568.

Homework and Lesson Assistance

At the elementary and secondary level, several teachers give their students homework and lessons to do after class. Usually, the work requested complements what has been covered in class.

At the start of the school year, ask your child's teacher or the school management for information on the homework and lesson support services available.

Particularly at the elementary level, it is desirable for a person to accompany and support the child in doing his or her homework and lessons. This person's role is to provide guidance, encouragement and help when the child encounters difficulties. This role often falls to the parents.

Several schools offer a homework and lesson support service during after school hours.

Seek help to meet your needs and those of your child during homework and lesson time. There are resources available at school and in your community.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

- College or university students also offer homework and lesson help services;
- Secondary school students enrolled in the International Studies Program sometimes have a few hours of their time to offer as part of a volunteer project;
- There are also several organizations that offer homework help services, for example, [Alloprof](#).

Extracurricular Activities

There are different activities at school that your child can take part in outside of class hours. These are extracurricular activities. For example, depending on their abilities, aptitudes and interests, your child could take part in sports, arts, culture, music or science activities.

Extracurricular activities can have a positive impact on your child. For example, they can:

- Facilitate their social integration;
- Develop their sense of belonging at school;
- Encourage the development of friendships;
- Allow them to develop values, qualities and aptitudes;
- Become a source of motivation for them;
- Allow them to experience successes;
- Encourage their self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Allowing them to take their mind off things, relax or expend their energy.

Remember to find out about the extracurricular activities offered at your child's school as soon as the school year starts!

EDUCATION APPROACH PROCESS

School Transitions

During their schooling, children experience important transitions, requiring them to adapt each time. Adaptation can be more difficult for a child with specific needs. These stages that the child must go through must be planned in advance to promote the success of his or her integration into the school system.

Here are the different possible transitions related to your child's academic life:

- The transition from early childhood to preschool;
- The transition from preschool to elementary school;
- The transition from elementary to secondary school;
- The transition from secondary to post-secondary education or working life.

General Advice to Better Manage the School Transitions

Here is some advice to help you as a parent and your child to successfully manage each of the school transitions.

You can use the "My Child's Profile" tool attached to this document to identify your child's strengths, abilities and needs.

Define Your Expectations

- Analyze your child's strengths, abilities and needs.
- Invite your child to define his or her strengths, abilities and needs, if possible.
- Think about school integration and the education options available.
- Get an idea of the environment that would be most appropriate to meet your child's needs, regarding the school, the type of education and your schedule.

Plan Transitions

- Find out about your child's new environment.
- Plan from the outset the actions and steps to be taken.

Prepare Your Child

- Ask him or her how they about this stage of his life.
- Reassure him or her if necessary.
- Describe what it will be like to arrive in this new environment.
- Take him or her on a tour of the new environment.
- If it's a school, show him or her the principal, teachers and professional staff.

Talk to the people who will be involved with your child

- Discuss your child's transition to the new environment with your child's interveners and service partners (e.g. school, daycare, rehabilitation institution or community organization).
- Request meetings to prepare your child's transition.

Transition from Early Childhood to Preschool

The transition from early childhood to preschool is a major milestone in a child's life. It marks the start of school and the beginning of a child's academic life. It's important that this transition goes smoothly. A well-planned transition, the involvement of different partners and good guidance will allow the child to integrate more easily into this new environment.

Preschool education (ages 4 and 5) is not compulsory. You may therefore choose not to enroll your child. In this case, it's important to take certain steps to make sure your child's daycare services continue.

As soon as your child reaches the age of 3, it's a good idea to start gathering information about his or her future education:

- From interveners, such as daycare or rehabilitation services, who may be working with your child;
- From the local school administration, the special education council or the school organization's special needs committee.

It's a good idea to keep a record of your child's strengths, tastes and habits. School staff will have a better understanding of your child's needs. This will help them offer services that are better adapted to their reality, as well as provide better collaboration between the family and the school.

If your child attends a daycare service before starting school, you can ask for a tool to be completed that will show, among other things, what your child has learned during his or her transition to daycare and the challenges that lie ahead.

In some regions, the various networks involved have joined forces to set up daycare-school transition mechanisms for children with specific needs. Transition documents to be completed by daycare services and parents are available. Please ask for them from the staff intervening with your child.

You can also consult this document produced by the Comité pour l'intégration des enfants handicapés dans les services de garde de la Montérégie: [Portrait de l'enfant en vue de sa fréquentation scolaire: Les interventions gagnantes en services de garde «La passerelle»](#).

School Registration

The registration period usually begins at the end of January and continues into February of each year. **Registration must be made before March 1 preceding the start of your child's school year.**

Keep an eye on your local newspapers or your school's website for the dates of the registration period.

As a parent, you have the right to choose the school that you feel best meets your expectations and your child's needs (LIP, article 4).

Each school has its own educational project that reflects its values and educational orientations. Some have specific projects that focus on the arts, for example, music or sports.

However, the school organization may or may not accept your choice. They will base their decision on the organization of their services and their enrolment criteria. For example, if your child needs to use a wheelchair, there may be accessibility constraints.

Your child must be enrolled in the public school in your neighborhood, even if you wish your child to attend another school in the public network. This may not be the case if the public school in your neighborhood is unable to provide your child with the services and adaptations required to meet his or her needs, abilities and disabilities.

However, if you choose a private school for your child, you must contact the school administration to find out about the registration procedure.

To find your local school: [Find a school](#) (French only).

When registering your child, you'll need to bring a number of compulsory documents. It's important to ask the school management about these.

When registering your child, remember to gather information about:

- School transportation;
- Daycare services;
- Extracurricular activities;
- Homework and lesson help available.

Meeting with the School Management

If the school management does not know your child, inform them of his or her diagnosis and special needs. It is possible, and even preferable, that meetings to prepare for your child's transition to school take place as part of the registration process. Ask for an appointment with the school management as soon as possible.

You can request that the school daycare manager and your child's teaching staff be present at these meetings.

The management may ask you to sign an authorization form to have access to information about your child.

During this meeting, it is very important to:

- Describe your child's strengths, abilities and needs;
- Communicate and explain your expectations and choices regarding their academic progress;
- Inform the management that the child has partners to support them, if applicable;
- Collect and record information on the steps that the school will take following this meeting.

To prepare for this meeting, you can use the tool titled *My Child's Profile* in the appendix of this document.

Schooling Options Based on the Child's Classification

Before the start of the school year, the school organization carries out an individualized assessment of your child's needs and abilities and makes a decision about his or her classification. Through this step, it ensures that the services offered to your child are the most appropriate for his or her situation. This classification determines the type of class or school in which your child will learn. The main schooling options are the mainstream class, the special class⁵ with integration into the mainstream class, the special class in a mainstream school or the special school.

The school organization must consider the mainstream class with the required adaptations and support as the preferred place for schooling if this integration is in the best interest of your child, i.e. if it would facilitate his or her learning and social integration. However, if this integration is not in his or her best interest or if it is shown to represent an excessive constraint, for example, if it significantly infringes on the rights of other students, other possibilities can then be considered. Thus, the classification refers to the group that your child will be part of.

.....
5. We can also talk about specialized classes, adapted classes or, in some schools, small groups.

Regular Class

In a mainstream class, the disabled student receives full-time education at his or her school. He or she is then part of the same group as other students of the same age who do not necessarily have any particular disabilities or difficulties.

The teaching staff should be aware of the student's needs and apply the means provided for in his or her intervention plan in the classroom. For example, they can differentiate their teaching, provide the student with more or less sustained assistance or adapt their work and assessments.

The student can receive the additional educational services he or she needs, for example, in remedial teaching, psychoeducation or speech therapy.

They may also be assisted by a special education technician or staff in charge of disabled students to help them carry out certain tasks or support them when moving around, if necessary. These various services allow them to receive the necessary assistance while studying in a regular class.

Special Class with Integration into a Regular Class

This option offers the student a shared education between the regular class and the special class, also called the adapted class or resource class. The time spent in each class is determined according to the student's needs. For example, the student could learn basic subjects such as mathematics and French in the special class and all other subjects in the regular class.

Special Class in a Mainstream School

A special class in a mainstream school may better meet the child's interests. These classes, of several types, are designed for students with special needs. Some include students with intellectual disabilities, others with speech or language impairments, behavioral disorders or autism spectrum disorders.

Specialized School

There are also specialized schools. All the students who attend these schools have special needs. The classes and services of these schools are organized according to the type of disability of the students they welcome.

Your child's needs may change over time. It is possible that he or she will attend a special class and may one day be able to join a mainstream class. Conversely, it may be that integration into a mainstream class or school is no longer suitable for your child. He or she could then be referred to an environment that better meets his or her needs.

Other Schooling Options

It is possible that the school organization does not have the necessary resources in its territory to accommodate the disabled child and meet his or her needs. In this case, it may enter into an extraterritorial agreement. This means that the school organization will enter into an agreement with another public school, an organization or a person that can offer the child the services they need to succeed in school.

The child could also be educated in a care center, a hospital or even at home if they are ill for a long period of time. These options are only considered as a last resort. The majority of children can be educated in a regular class, a special class or a specialized school.

Ordinary or specialized private schools are another option for a child's education. They are mainly found in the Quebec City and Montreal regions and higher school fees must be considered. However, if the provision of educational services to the child is the responsibility of a private institution outside the territory under an extraterritorial agreement, the original school organization may assume the school and transportation costs (in the event that it organizes school transportation for the students under its responsibility. (See in particular the LIP, articles 209 2°, 213 and 296.)

Consider the Classification Assigned to your Child

When you are informed of the placement decision for your child, take time to think about it. You are not obliged to agree with this decision. Ask to visit the proposed school or class to find out about its advantages and limitations. You will then have a better idea of the environment.

Some questions can also help you determine whether this placement meets your expectations and is suitable for your child's needs.

Whatever the education option

- Is the proposed school in my neighborhood or in another neighborhood?
- What are the reasons behind this decision?
- Do I agree with the school's educational project?
- What are the transportation arrangements for my child?
- What are the childcare arrangements?
- How will my child react?
- What impact will this choice have on their development?
- Is the decision in their best interest?

Whatever the proposal, try to determine what the impact will be on your child's learning and socialization as well as on family life.

If the Decision Involves Integration into a Mainstream Class

- Which support measures or services have been recommended for my child?
- Will these services be implemented at the start of the school year and will they be sufficient to enable my child to be properly educated, socialized and develop in the same way as the other students?
- What is the attitude of the teaching staff towards integrating my child into their class?
- Does the teaching staff need any particular training or information?

If the Decision Favors the Special Class

- How many students are there in this class?
- What are their needs?
- What is the approach of the teaching staff?
- What services will be offered to my child, and will they be sufficient?
- Will there be integration periods in class?

If the Decision Favors the Specialized School

- Which specialized school is offered to me?
- What other choices are available to me?
- What services will be offered to my child, and will they be sufficient?

If the Decision Favors Another Option

- What option is being offered to me?
- Why is this option being offered to me?
- Is a return to mainstream education planned?
- If so, what steps will be taken to achieve this integration?
- How will my child react?
- What impact will this choice have on his or her development?

Preparation of the Intervention Plan

The intervention plan is a document that is used to define the strengths and needs of the student and to describe the means that will be implemented to help him or her at school. The information it contains guides interventions with the student. It serves as a reference tool for parents as well as for teaching staff and professional staff at the school. It is used in all schools in Quebec with students who have disabilities or who have academic or behavioral difficulties.

Your child's educational plan is important because it promotes educational success. Regardless of the education option chosen for your child, you will be asked to participate in its development and follow-up.

For more information, you can consult the [outline](#) of the intervention plan proposed by the MEQ as well as the accompanying [framework of reference](#).

Content of an Intervention Plan

- General Information:
 - The name of the student and his or her date of birth;
 - The name of his or her school and the class he or she attends;
 - The date of the meeting;
 - The names of those present and their positions.
- Description of the student's abilities and needs in terms of:
 - Didactic (learning, school subjects);
 - Socio-affective (relations and interactions with others);
 - Physical (vision, hearing, memory, language, gross and fine motor skills);
 - Behavioral (autonomy, compliance for rules and authority).
- Description of the student's needs. All those involved in the intervention plan meeting work together to define the student's priority needs.
- Objectives to be achieved. To be effective, the objectives must be precise and measurable.
- Preferred methods. Concrete methods are suggested for achieving the predetermined.

PLEASE NOTE THAT

The recognized adaptive measures for the student must be included in the intervention plan to be applied.

- Responsible for the objectives and the implementation of the means. For each of the objectives to be achieved and the means to be implemented, it is determined who is responsible. This may be the parents, the teaching staff or the persons involved with the pupil.
- Implementation schedule. The intervention plan must state when the objectives should be achieved.
- Evaluation of results. This part allows the results observed during the implementation of the intervention plan to be noted.

It is important to know that it is not compulsory for parents to sign the school intervention plan. School staff can apply the intervention plan to the student without the parents' consent.

For more information, you can consult this document produced by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ): [The signing by parents of the school intervention plan](#). (La signature par les parents du plan d'intervention en milieu scolaire).

People Involved in Developing the Intervention Plan

The school management, with the help of the parents of a student with special educational needs, the staff who provide services to this student and the student himself or herself, unless he or she is incapable of doing so, draws up an intervention plan adapted to the student's needs. This plan must comply with the school organization's policy on the organization of educational services for students with special educational needs and include the assessment of the student's abilities and needs made by the school organization before the student is classified and enrolled in the school. It must also indicate the possibility of resorting to the complaint handling procedure provided for by the NSOA in the event of dissatisfaction on the part of the parent or the pupil (LIP, article 96.14).

The student's teaching staff and the people who work with him or her are the people who can attend the meeting to draw up the individualized education plan.

In addition, other partners involved with the child may be present, for example, a community organization or a private speech therapist hired by the parents.

The school administration cannot refuse to allow the parents to be supported by a disability integration counselor or a disability integration counselor from the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, who can also make representations in accordance with Article 26 of the *Law*. It should be noted that school authorities have an obligation to collaborate with the representatives of the Office (Article 26.4 of the *Act*).

If you would like support in drawing up your child's intervention plan:

Office des personnes handicapées du Québec

Telephone: **1 800 567-1465**

Fax: 1 800 567-1477

E-mail: aide@ophq.gouv.qc.ca

Meeting for the Intervention Plan

You may be invited to attend one or more meetings concerning your child's intervention plan.

The first meeting usually takes place in September or October. Other meetings may be held during the school year. These will be used to review the objectives and resources included in the intervention plan. **It is important to plan the date for the follow-up meeting.**

Before the Meeting for the Intervention Plan

It is important to be well prepared before a meeting concerning your child's intervention plan. Major decisions will be made about his or her educational life, which can have a significant impact on his or her educational success.

- **Prepare a file on your child's situation.** Prepare a file in which you will include the daycare service's evaluation files, school reports, medical reports, a diagnosis or any other relevant information concerning your child.

- **Describe your child.** This information will be useful for introducing your child and addressing his or her special needs to the professionals involved. It will help them to better define his or her priority needs and choose effective ways to help.
- **Identify your expectations.** It is important that you know what you want for your child. It is equally relevant that you communicate your expectations to the school, the teaching staff and the professionals involved during the meeting concerning your child's intervention plan.

You can use the tool titled *My Child's Profile* in the appendix of this document. This will help you to provide a profile of your child for the intervention plan.

During the Meeting for the Intervention Plan

- **Participate in the meetings.** As a parent, you are primarily responsible for your child's education. Your presence at the meetings to develop his or her intervention plan is essential. Your child should also be present, if he or she is able.
- **Play an active role.** It is crucial to share your knowledge about your child, to give your opinion on his or her needs and on the means to be used to help him or her.
- **Ask questions.** It is important that you fully understand your child's situation at school and what will be implemented to help them. Everyone involved in the intervention plan has a common goal: to help the student progress. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Once the intervention plan has been drawn up, ask the management or the school staff involved with your child regularly about his or her progress. Don't hesitate to ask for meetings to make changes or adjustments to the intervention plan.

You can request a copy of your child's intervention plan. It is advisable to do so in order to keep a record of the interventions carried out at school. You can add the copy of the intervention plan to your child's file.

Support for students with special needs⁶

Support for students with special needs is provided through **differentiated teaching**, which involves tailoring lessons to the abilities, needs and diverse interests of students of different ages, backgrounds, abilities and skills, thus enabling them to make optimal progress in developing the skills targeted by the program (MEQ).

There are three forms of educational differentiation, each targeting different needs.

- **Educational flexibility** aims to enable all students to carry out the activities proposed in class and to progress in their learning in relation to the QEP corresponding to the level of the class group. Educational flexibility should be implemented in all subjects to promote students' academic success.

6. Québec (2014), *Précisions sur la flexibilité pédagogique, les mesures d'adaptation et les modifications pour les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers*, Québec, ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 10 p.

- The **adaptive measures** planned as part of the student's individualized education plan are intended to enable the student to learn and demonstrate the same learning as other students. The fact that they are agreed in the individualized education plan ensures that they are monitored.
- The **modification of expectations** in relation to the requirements of the QEP, planned as part of the student's individualized education plan, aims to enable the student to progress to the best of his or her ability, regarding the learning objectives set out in the QEP corresponding to the academic level of the class group. Modification means lowering expectations in relation to the requirements of the QEP. Consequently, the implementation of adaptation measures should be considered first.

This is an exceptional arrangement, and it is important that the student's parents and the student him/herself are informed of the implications of such a decision on the student's academic progress.

Since the student is assessed in relation to modified expectations, a note in the student report indicates this. A distinctive sign indicates that the expectations in relation to the requirements of the QEP have been modified for this student. The student's result is not counted in the group average for that subject. And in secondary school, the student does not obtain the credits attached to the affected subject, even if the modification relates to only one skill in that subject. The modification of expectations in relation to the requirements of the QEP can therefore compromise the granting of the secondary school diploma.

In the appendix, you will find a table showing the distinctions between pedagogical flexibility, adaptation measures and changes in expectations.

To find out more, you can also read this document: [Différenciation pédagogique – Soutenir tous les élèves pour favoriser leur réussite éducative](#).

Communication with Teaching Staff

Whether your child is in a mainstream or special class, communication with the teacher is very important. This person is generally the one who spends the most time with your child and is in charge of him or her at school. A good working relationship should be established at the beginning of the school year.

Remember that communication is the key to collaboration with teaching staff.

Meeting at the Start of the Year

It is important to attend the meeting at the beginning of the year. Your presence will show your child that you are interested and committed. In addition, you will learn more about the subjects in the school program, teaching methods, the expectations of the teaching staff and how the classroom operates and the rules that apply. You can ask questions or request clarification if necessary.

If you have not already done so, request a one-on-one meeting with your child's teacher to discuss their needs. During this meeting, you can agree on a means of communication.

Method of Communication

It is important to keep in touch with the teaching staff so that you can find out how your child is progressing. Information on this subject can be exchanged via the school agenda, a monitoring notebook or by telephone or e-mail.

Collaboration with teaching staff is essential, but it is important to agree on suitable times to discuss your child.

Each teacher has their own preferences when it comes to the method of communication with parents. Some use a code, for example of colors or symbols, or a reward system adapted to your child's needs. The method of communication can also provide you with information on how the school day is going.

For the method of communication to be effective, it is in your interest, as well as that of the teacher, to use it regularly or as soon as important information needs to be communicated. This will ensure follow-up from school to home and vice versa.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

According to the Basic School Regulation (article 29.2), information must be provided to the parents of a minor student at least once a month if this information was provided for in the student's intervention plan, with the aim of promoting collaboration between the parents and the school in the application of the intervention plan?

School Report

The school report is intended as a communication tool between the school and parents. It will enable you to keep track of your child's progress, especially in terms of learning. If your child is able, take the time to look at his or her report with him or her and discuss, among other things, his or her improvements, the difficulties he or she is encountering and the challenges that lie ahead.

The distribution of the school report often involves a meeting with the teaching staff. This meeting is important. It will allow you to learn more about your child's learning and behavior.

The school report and the meetings it implies should not be the only means of communication with the teaching staff. Exchanges with parents should be more frequent when it comes to a student with special needs.

Transition from School to Working Life

The end of their academic life and the transition to adult life represent particular challenges for young people with disabilities. This transition to working life can be greatly facilitated if it is planned. It is with this objective in mind that the school-to-work transition (SWT) approach was developed.

This approach aims to:

- support young people in identifying their life plan;
- allow parents to reflect on their vision of the future for their child;
- promote the social and professional integration of young people in their environment.

It allows young people to:

- maximize their autonomy and development;
- develop a better knowledge of their interests;
- learn about the organizations and services available at the end of their education, to make sure they can continue to use these services when they become adults.

Generally, from the age of 16, or from the start of internships when these are part of the academic program, the student will be asked to identify his or her life plan and set goals to achieve it. Experience shows that the earlier the process begins in the student's life, the more effective and achievable the planning will be. The school and community partners will support the young person in this process and help them achieve their goals.

To initiate an SWT process for your child, you can discuss it with the management of his secondary school or with the intervener staff of a health and social services institution. For example, the rehabilitation institution where he or she receives services.

With this approach, the interventions of the school and the partners will mainly focus on:

- the social participation of young people in the various aspects of their lives, for example, work, rewarding activities, continuing education, leisure, housing and transportation;
- preparation for adult life based on the young person's choice of living environment and the transformation of their social network at the end of their education.

For more information, please read the Guide for Supporting the Transition from School to Active Life (*Guide pour soutenir la démarche de transition de l'école vers la vie active (TEVA)*).

RESOURCES

Throughout his or her life, your child will experience successes, but he or she will also encounter difficulties that will challenge you as a parent. It is completely understandable that you may sometimes feel helpless in the face of the situations that arise. There are people and organizations that can support you in your child's academic life, including:

- the school network;
- interveners from the health and social services network;
- the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (Quebec office for the disabled);
- organizations and associations for parents of disabled children;
- private sector interveners.

If you would like support with your child's education:

Office des personnes handicapées du Québec

Telephone: **1 800 567-1465**

Fax: 1 800 567-1477

E-mail: aide@ophq.gouv.qc.ca

Complaints Procedure

In the event of dissatisfaction with the school services that a student has received, is receiving, should have received or requires, a complaint may be lodged by the student or his or her parents, regardless of the type of school attended.

Complaints processing reform

Since August 28, 2023, a new mechanism for handling complaints and reports in schools has been in place under the NEPA. As a result, all school service centers, school boards and private educational institutions now have a three-step national complaints procedure, which also applies to home-schooled children.

National Student Ombudsperson

An autonomous institution outside the school network, the National Student Ombudsperson is Quebec's education Ombudsperson. The National Student Ombudsperson is in charge of applying the complaints procedure (NSOA, art. 17) and for reporting acts of sexual violence in the Quebec school system (NSOA, art. 46). As part of this national, standardized procedure, the National Student Ombudsperson can count on the presence of regional student ombudspersons throughout Quebec. The National Student Ombudsperson coordinates, distributes and supervises the work of the regional Student Ombudspersons, who must follow his or her instructions in this regard (*Education Act*, s. 11).

To contact the National Student Ombudsperson:

Telephone or text: 1 833 420-5233

E-mail: plaintes-pne@pne.gouv.qc.ca

Making a complaint: [Web complaint form](#)

Procedure for Filing a Complaint Following Dissatisfaction with a School Service

Step 1 – Person directly concerned or his/her superior

To file a complaint, you must first contact the person directly concerned or his or her immediate superior. You can make your complaint verbally, but it is preferable to put it in writing so that you can keep a record of the exchanges. The person receiving the complaint has **10 working days** to respond (NSOA, art. 23 and *Regulation respecting the procedure for filing and processing complaints*, art. 2).

DID YOU KNOW THAT

You may be able to obtain advice or be supported by a council member from the Office de l'intégration des personnes handicapées in your efforts on behalf of your child. We recommend that you call on the services of the Office at the very beginning of the process, to help you work out solutions with the people involved, in the best interests of your child.

Step 2 – Person in charge for handling complaints

If you remain dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been handled, or if the ten-working-day time limit has passed, you must contact the person in charge of handling complaints at the school service center, school board or private educational institution. This can be done orally, but it's a good idea to keep a written record of your complaint. Your complaint will be processed **within 15 working days**. (NSOA, art. 24-25 and *Regulation respecting the procedure for filing and processing complaints*, art. 2).

Step 3 – Regional Student Ombudsperson

If you are still dissatisfied with the handling of your complaint or if the period of 15 working days has elapsed, you must write to the Regional Student Ombudsperson in your region (NSOA, art. 31). The protector may, if you so request, assist you in formulating your complaint in writing or in any related steps (NSOA, art. 30).

The Regional Student Ombudsperson has **20 working days** to examine your complaint and issue their conclusions. They may also make recommendations to the school service center, the school board or the private educational institution. They then forward their conclusions and recommendations, if any, to the national student protector (NSOA, art. 44).

The **National Student Ombudsperson has five working days** to inform the Regional Student Ombudsperson of his or her intention to examine the complaint or not. If he or she decides to examine the complaint, he or she has **10 working days** to complete the examination and substitute his or her conclusions or recommendations for those of the Regional Student Ombudsperson.

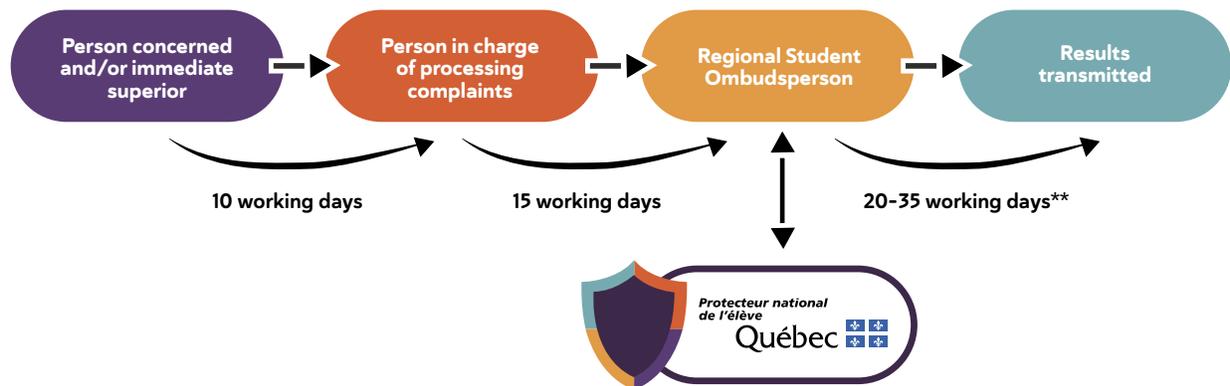
At the end of the prescribed time limits, as the case may be, the Regional Student Ombudsperson shall inform, in writing, the complainant and the school service center, the school board or the private educational institution of the conclusions and the grounds on which they are based and shall make recommendations, if any.

Possibility of additional time in special circumstances

Note that according to article 44, paragraph 6, of the *Act respecting the national Student Ombudsperson*: If the complaint is not processed within 25 working days of its receipt, the Regional Student Ombudsperson shall inform the complainant and the school service center or private educational institution and shall inform them of the reasons justifying an additional delay.

The school service center, the school board or the private educational institution has **10 working days** to inform the complainant and the Regional Student Ombudsperson of the follow-up action it intends to take and, where applicable, the reasons for refusing to take action (NSOA, art. 45).

Summary of Complaints Handling Procedure*



- * Note that a Regional Student Ombudsperson may examine a complaint without the first two steps having been completed:
- if they are of the opinion that compliance with these stages is not likely to adequately correct the situation or that the time taken to process the complaint at the previous stages makes the intervention of the Regional Student Ombudsperson unnecessary;
 - if the complaint concerns an act of sexual violence.

* The diagram and guidance shown above are taken from the following source: [Traitement des plaintes – Centre de services scolaire de Montréal \(gouv.qc.ca\)](http://Traitement des plaintes – Centre de services scolaire de Montréal (gouv.qc.ca).).

- ** The Regional Student Ombudsperson will have 20 working days to complete the examination of the complaint and determine the conclusions. The National Student Ombudsperson will have five working days to inform the Regional Student Ombudsperson of his intention to examine the complaint. If he or she decides to examine the complaint, he or she will then have ten working days to complete the examination and, if he or she deems it appropriate, substitute his or her conclusions or recommendations for those of the Regional Student Ombudsperson.

To find out more about the complaints procedure, you can visit this web page: [Porter plainte à la suite d'une insatisfaction envers un service scolaire](#) or watch this short explanatory video: [Le Protecteur national de l'élève en bref](#).

Legal Action

As a last resort, you can appeal to the courts. However, you should be aware that this can be a complex and costly process. Note that the Regional Student Ombudsperson may refuse to consider a complaint when an appeal has already been lodged with a court (NSOA, art. 32).

If you have reason to believe that your child is the victim of discrimination because of a disability, you can contact the CDPDJ, which, after investigation, can file a complaint with the Tribunal des droits de la personne: [Filing a complaint with the CDPDJ](#).

APPENDIX I

MY CHILD'S PROFILE

To introduce your child to the management of the school where you would like him or her to be educated, we suggest that you prepare a document that allows him or her to be known as a person and not only in terms of his or her diagnosis. To help you in this process, we invite you to read the text below by Mr. Jean-François Martin, father of Karl, a student with Down syndrome. Finally, we present a series of questions to help you develop a profile of your child. Feel free to include photos of your child in different situations, for example, with friends from the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) and during playtime.

A Working Paper on your Child's Personality

By Jean-François Martin

Note: The text has been published with the authorization of Mr. Jean-François Martin

When the time came to integrate Karl into a mainstream school, I thought it might be useful to have a short document explaining Down's syndrome, as well as describing Karl's personality. So, I put a lot of thought into it and came up with a document that I believe had a positive effect on Karl's file with the school board.

You don't have to be a gifted writer to produce this kind of document. Of course, it will take some time for you to think about it in to better define your child's characteristics, but if you use the format that I suggest for creating your working document, it will make your task easier. The important thing is to keep this document concise and not too long, because the people at the school board will not be tempted to read a document that vaguely resembles a university thesis.

It is important to be honest and not hide important information about your child, even if it could work against him or her in an integration project. The school needs to have an accurate picture of your child to properly assess the support that will be needed by those involved in this project. Pretending that your child is "clean" when this is not the case can be a major pitfall when the teacher comes into contact with this natural phenomenon in his or her classroom. Your credibility as a parent will be damaged and you may well have the teacher on your back, and rightly so. It's not a good start to your child's integration project.

To make the document more interesting, I wrote it as if the narrator was Karl himself! He shows himself and discusses the points on which I wanted to provide information. If you would like to obtain a copy of the document that I prepared for Karl or to consult it, you can contact the Regroupement pour la trisomie 21 at www.trisomie.qc.ca. Then, all you have to do is go there with your own color to create your own and, when you have finished, have someone outside your family read it to test its effectiveness.

The Document Should Include the Following:

Child's Personality Characteristics

The qualities and flaws are mentioned so that people can form as accurate a picture as possible of the child. To do this, consult your friends, neighbors or family members and ask them to describe your child as they see him or her. This approach allows you to get a slightly more accurate picture, because as a parent, we often tend to see only the positive sides! On the other hand, you don't have to take everything that other people tell you. Be careful to sort through their comments.

Knowledge Acquired to Date

Ask yourself the question: "What is my child able to do? Is he or she able to stay focused when he or she plays? Is he or she able to get dressed by himself or herself? Is he or she able to recognize colors? All this information is important because it will allow a short evaluation of the child's abilities. If your child receives services from a rehabilitation center or attends an Early Childhood Development Center, ask for help from their specialized educator to complete this part. With the annual evaluation they generate, you will be able to obtain additional information.

The Child's Method of Communication

Communication is often problematic for many children. With certain diagnoses, people sometimes tend to think that they do not speak or are not able to communicate verbally. It is therefore up to you to break this prejudice by demonstrating the means your child uses to communicate. For example, if your child uses sign language, make sure to reassure the interveners by indicating that they will be given a manual on the sign language used by your child or that someone will give them tools to help them better understand this method of communication. Remind them of some basic communication concepts.

The Time Spent at the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) or Daycare

This is one of the most important sections of the document. The years your child has spent in the ECDC will be decisive in determining whether they are accepted into a mainstream class. One of the arguments often used to refuse a child in a mainstream class is their ability to function in a group. It will be argued that, given that, the teacher cannot look after your child all the time, which requires a certain degree of autonomy in a group. Quite rightly, your child has learned to function in a group during his or her time at the ECDC and, in addition, has developed several social skills. It is therefore up to you to bring out this valuable information by inserting the annual reports from the ECDC or by asking the educator or the ECDC management for a short report.

What you Expect from the School

One of the fears of the academic world is not being able to meet parents' expectations regarding their child's educational success. Perhaps your child is capable of completing the same school program as other children, but perhaps he or she is not. You must indicate what your expectations are for your child's schooling at the social and educational level.

Furthermore, these expectations must be perceived as realistic by the teachers. The social and educational skills that the child will achieve will be adapted to him or her. It is therefore essential to mention this in this section to allow everyone to start with the same expectations.

Support Needed for your Child

Based on the section on the child's knowledge, you can try to work out what your child's possible needs might be to allow him or her to function well in a normal class. Once again, do not try to diminish your child's real needs, but rather show the reality as it is by describing all the times when the child can function alone.

Information on the Diagnosis

People may need information about your child's diagnosis. Remember your own need to know more when you received your child's diagnosis. It's important to respond to this need to avoid creating or maintaining prejudices. This section may seem a little more technical, but you can always draw your creative inspiration from certain books or the websites of associations representing people with this diagnosis. The important thing is to make sure that your text is not too long, and that the reader learns important information that can be transferred to a school environment.

MY CHILD'S PROFILE

Name: _____

His/her strengths:

What is he/she good at (sports, arts, crafts, etc.)?

His/her preferences:

What does my child like?

What my child doesn't like?

His/her habits:

How are things at home (sleeping, eating, homework, etc.)

His/her needs:

What helps?

His/her difficulties:

What's difficult for him/her?

His/her gross motor development:

How are his/her gross motor skills (running, walking, etc.)?

How is his/her fine motor skills (writing, tracing, cutting, etc.)?

Cognitive Development:

What school subjects does he/she enjoy?

What school subjects does he/she find difficult?

Communication:

How does he/she comply with directives?

How does he/she communicate his/her emotions and needs?

How does he/she express himself/herself orally?

His/her relationships with others:

How does he or she relate to others?

What is his/her personality (solitary, sociable, shy, etc.)?

His/her behavior:

Does he/she ever display aggressive or angry behavior? When does this occur?

Is my child calm or active? When does this occur?

Other information:

My child's good deeds:

APPENDIX II

SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS REGARDING MY CHILD'S EDUCATION

See the sections and suggested tools in brackets to help you get started.

The year before school starts

- I'm thinking about my child's school integration. (*School integration in a regular class*)
- I'm thinking about the transition from early childhood to preschool. (*School transition*)
- I'm inquiring about the schools in my organization. (*Schooling options according to child's classification*)
- I'm choosing the school that best meets my child's needs. (*School registration*)

In January and February preceding the start of the school year

- I submit my request for a specific needs allowance to the school administration.
- If my child attends a daycare service, I request that a detailed evaluation of his or her integration be completed before starting school.
- I register my child at my local school (before March 1). (*School registration*)
- The school organization conducts an evaluation of my child. I make sure I participate. (*Schooling options according to child's classification*)
- I make sure my child is registered for school transportation. (*School registration*)

From March to May of the school year

- I organize my child's transition to preschool. (*School transitions*)
- I plan ways to facilitate my child's integration.
- I make teachers aware of my child's specific needs. (*Tool - My child's profile*)
- In some school organizations, the intervention plan is drawn up in April. (*Development of the intervention plan*)

See the sections and suggested tools in brackets to help you get started.

**From June to August
between two school
years**

- I prepare my child for the new school year. I make him or her want to go to school.
- I prepare my child's brothers and sisters who are already at school.
- In August, I establish a routine to prepare my child for the school schedule.
- I make sure everything is ready for the start of school (transition, communications). (**School transitions**)

**In August before
the start of the
school year**

- I make the school principal aware of my child's arrival. I describe my child's strengths and needs. (**Tool – My child's profile**)
- I prepare for the development of my child's intervention plan. (**Developing an intervention plan**)
- I make sure management invites me to participate in the intervention plan.
- I offer my collaboration. (**Tool – Contact information**)
- I identify the committees I'd like to participate in. Don't forget that I can also sit on the institution's council. (**Quebec school system**)
- I provide my child with the necessary materials (the school provides a list of school supplies).

**At the beginning
of the school year
in September**

- I suggest that my child's intervention plan be drawn up within a reasonable timeframe, if this has not already been done. (**Tool – Contact information**)
- I participate in the annual general meeting of parents. (**Quebec school system**)
- I participate in the first parents' meeting with my child's teacher. (**Communication with teaching staff**)

During the school year

- I ask the principal or school staff about my child's progress on a regular basis. (**Tool – Contact information**)
- I request adjustments to the intervention plan as needed. (**Development of intervention plan**) (**Tool – Contact information**)

APPENDIX III

CONTACT DETAILS OF INTERVENERS AND PARTNERS INVOLVED IN MY CHILD'S EDUCATION

	Name	Telephone	E-mail
School Management			
Full-time Teacher			
Special Education Teacher Subject: _____			
Specialized Teacher Subject: _____			
Learning Specialist			
Psychoeducator			
Psychologist			

	Name	Telephone	E-mail
Speech Therapist			
Occupational Therapist			
Special Education Technician			
Attendant for Disabled Students			
Visual Interpreter			
Person in charge of Daycare Services			
Guidance Counselor			
Pedagogical Counselor			
Special Education Counselor			

	Name	Telephone	E-mail
Person in charge of the Special Needs Committee			
Person in charge of the Parents' Committee			
Head of the Institution Council			
Person in charge of School Transportation			
Rehabilitation Center Intervener			
Councillor for the integration of disabled people at the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec			
Association of Parents of Disabled Children			
Association of Parents of Disabled Children			
Association of Parents of Disabled Children			

APPENDIX IV

EDUCATIONAL FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

The following table is taken from the information document *Précisions sur la flexibilité pédagogique, les mesures d'adaptation et les modifications pour les élèves ayant des besoins spécifiques* (Details on pedagogical flexibility, accommodations and modifications for students with special needs), developed in 2014 by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.

Differences between educational flexibility support, adaptation support and modification support

Educational Flexibility	Adaptation Measures	Modifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows students to achieve and demonstrate the same learning as other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows students to achieve and demonstrate the same learning as other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows the student to achieve and demonstrate the learning established in his or her individualized education plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets a need that arises on an ad hoc basis or as a complement to an adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets a need that arises in several contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented on an exceptional basis to allow a progression different from that established for all Quebec students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned by the teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned in concert with the intervention plan approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned in a concerted manner as part of the individualized education plan process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented for one teaching period or for a few activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented in subjects for which the adaptation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented in the subjects for which the modification is required
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A distinctive sign appears in the report

APPENDIX V

DIFFICULTY CODE

IMPORTANT

The following information is shown for information purposes only. For specific questions about difficulty codes, please refer to the MEQ or your school organization.

The difficulty code is administrative information that was used by the MEQ to determine the funding allocated to each school organization. As of 2024, the MEQ is reforming the way it funds services for special needs students. Since the difficulty code is still associated with several budgetary rules, it may still be used in the school network for an undetermined period. Here is some information that may be useful to you as a parent during the work surrounding the MEQ's reform of the funding of services for students with special needs.

PLEASE NOTE

- That your child can receive help even if he or she doesn't have a difficulty code. For example, a child who shows behavioural problems, but who does not have a difficulty code, could receive complementary services;
- Your child's difficulty code does not necessarily mean that he or she will be enrolled in a special class or school.

Not all students with disabilities are assigned a difficulty code. Three conditions, defined by the MEQ, must be shown for a student to be assigned a difficulty code:

1. First, a diagnostic evaluation must have been carried out by qualified personnel. The findings of this evaluation are used to determine the nature of the impairment or disorder.
2. Secondly, disabilities and limitations must result from the impairment or disorder in terms of schooling. These incapacities and limitations restrict or prevent the student's learning regarding the QEP, as well as the development of his or her autonomy and socialization. For example, perceptual, motor and communication skills are severely limited, requiring individualized assessment and stimulation methods or the use of technical aids.
3. Finally, support measures must be implemented to reduce the inconvenience caused by the student's impairment or disorder, i.e., to allow him/her to evolve in the school environment despite his/her disabilities or limitations. For example, teachers may observe that the student has poorly developed social skills and is at risk of showing inappropriate social behaviours.

To assign a difficulty code to your child, the special education department of the school organization prepares a file concerning his or her situation. This file includes, for the student concerned, the diagnostic evaluation and professional conclusions, the limitations or incapacities as well as the manifestations the student's limitations or disabilities, as well as the manifestations generally observed by the teaching staff in terms of learning and functioning at school. The file is then forwarded to the MEQ for approval.

There are 12 difficulty codes, depending on the student's disabilities:

Difficulty code 14: severe behavioural disorders;

Difficulty code 23: profound intellectual disability;

Difficulty code 24: moderate to severe intellectual disability;

Difficulty code 33: mild motor impairment;

Difficulty code 33: organic impairment;

Difficulty code 34: language impairment;

Difficulty code 36: severe motor impairment;

Difficulty code 42: visual impairment;

Difficulty code 44: hearing impairment;

Difficulty code 50: pervasive developmental disorders;

Difficulty code 53: psychopathological disorders;

Difficulty code 99: code 99 is exceptionally assigned to a student when certain conditions are present.



Office des personnes
handicapées

Québec

