



# Special Education A Communication Guide for Families and Students

## I have a concern. Where do I start?

Student achievement and well-being is a priority for us. We work together with students, families and support teams to support student learning, achievement and well-being.

If you have questions or a concern, we encourage you to contact us. Most situations can be resolved with dialogue and cooperation at the local level.

### 1. Determine who to contact.

The best place to start is with the person closest to the concern. For example, this could be the classroom teacher, special education resource teacher (SERT), bus driver, etc.

Learn more about [who to contact if you have a concern](#), or how to [contact us](#).

### 2. Prepare

- Gather information. Be clear about the facts.
- Organize what you want to highlight.
- Know what questions you want to ask.
- It may be helpful to contact an [organization](#) that supports children and families with special education needs. There is a list at the end of this document.
- You are welcome to involve a friend or advocate at any time.



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### 3. Communicate with school staff.

- Contact the school and arrange a meeting with the staff member(s) to discuss your concern.
- Focus on one or two concerns at a time.
- Share information you feel is important about your child.
- Share information that you have gathered from outside sources that may help with programming decisions at school.
- Listen actively. Every person in the discussion has important information to share.
- Give some thought to the solutions you would like to see.
- Plan next steps together.
- Take notes of discussion items and decisions made.

**Your concern is important. Sometimes getting to the best solutions takes time. We are committed to working together.**

## What if I don't feel my concern has been addressed?

If you feel your concern has not been addressed, follow these steps below. If you have questions or a concern, we encourage you to contact us

Contact your child's **teacher or special education resource teacher** for questions related to the classroom, special education support/programs. In secondary school, you can also contact the **special education department head**.

Contact the school **principal or vice-principal** if you have questions or concerns about the school. This may include student progress or student behaviour.

Contact your **student services coordinator**. They provide support for special education, identification and programs. They can be reached at your [community education centre](#).

Contact your **school superintendent** if your concern remains unresolved or is about a community-wide issue. You may also contact your superintendent if you have questions about Board-level support. You can find your school superintendent contact on your [school's website](#).

You can contact your local [trustee](#) at any time. Your trustee can assist you with concerns about your community, ideas and suggestions for the Board, policies under review, etc.

You may also wish to contact the appropriate [Board department](#) if your concern is not school related, including Student Transportation, Inclusive Schools and Community Services, and Student Services.

The [Ministry of Education](#) administers the system of publicly funded elementary and secondary school education in Ontario.

We are committed to addressing concerns in a fair, equitable and timely manner.

The Board also has a [Human Rights Office](#). If you have a human rights related concern and/or complaint, the first step is to engage with the school or the superintendent. Following a review of the matter, a determination is made on whether or not it is to be referred to the Board's [Human Rights Office](#).

Many policies, procedures and processes have been developed to help support students, families and the community, including the [Supporting Community Concerns Policy](#).

# What community resources are available?

In YRDSB, the [Special Education Advisory Committee](#) (SEAC) plays an important role. They advise the Board about the programs and services required by students identified with exceptional learning needs.

SEAC may make recommendations to the Board about establishing and developing special education programs and services. There are many organizations represented on SEAC that provide assistance and resources to families.

You may access information about SEAC at [www.yrdsb.ca](http://www.yrdsb.ca) and select Special Education.

The following organizations are currently represented on the Board's SEAC:

- Association for Bright Children-York Region North
- Association for Bright Children-York Region South
- Autism Ontario Central East Region
- Children's Treatment Network (CTN)
- Community Living Central York
- Community Living Georgina
- Community Living York South
- Down Syndrome Society of York Region
- Early Intervention Services of York Region
- Easter Seals Ontario
- Learning Disabilities Association of York-Simcoe
- Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)
- VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
- Your Support Services Network