



A Family's Guide to Special Equipment Allocation (SEA)

Funding for Students with Special Education Needs

Students with special education needs may be eligible for equipment to help them learn. This is accessed through a fund called the Special Equipment Allocation (SEA).

This guide will give you more information about:

- what SEA is
- eligibility
- examples of equipment
- how your child may be able to access this equipment



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What is the Special Equipment Allocation (SEA)?

The Special Equipment Allocation (SEA) helps with the cost of equipment essential for students with special education needs to:

- attend school and/or,
- access the Ontario Curriculum and/or,
- access an alternative program.

This equipment is also called **assistive technology**. Assistive technology can be hardware (i.e., computer), software, or mobility equipment, and/or communication technology. Some of this technology is available on school computers to all students in the York Region District School Board (YRDSB).

Equipment

Equipment that is eligible for SEA funding includes:

- amplification systems (including FM systems and soundfield systems)
- electronic magnifiers
- computer hardware (including laptops, desktops, technology switches and mounting equipment)
- software that provides access to the curriculum (including speech to text, text to speech, word prediction and organization software)
- specialized seating and accessible desks
- braille
- communication aids, such as speech synthesizers
- standers and walkers
- personal care items such as lifts, change tables and commodes
- specialized bikes and trikes

Eligibility

To be eligible for SEA funding, equipment must be:

- recommended by a qualified professional (i.e., psychologist, speech-language pathologist, physiotherapist and/or occupational therapist, qualified SEA authorizer for the visually impaired, audiologist);
- not available through the Board's regular day school supply and/or computer purchasing budget; and,
- students must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to be eligible for SEA funding.

How can the equipment help?

Some students need this equipment in the same way that other students need eyeglasses or other aids.

Assistive technology can help students with special needs to:

- build on individual strengths
- gain motivation
- improve learning and achievement and
- be more independent with school work

What do I do if I think my child needs SEA equipment?

Connect with the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) at your child's school. They will start the process:

- 1. In-School Team Meeting**
- 2. Trials, Data Collection, and Evaluation**
- 3. YRDSB Professional Report (supporting SEA claim)**

Step 1: In-School Team Meeting:

If appropriate, the school will schedule an In-School Team meeting to discuss supports for your child.

School staff and regulated health professionals (e.g. psychologists) may attend. Consent is required for regulated health professionals to attend the In-School Team meeting.

The Principal will tell you about the In-School Team meeting.

Step 2: Trials, Data Collection, and Evaluation:

This step includes:

- reviewing professional reports, if applicable
- observing your child
- trialling the equipment to see if it helps the child's learning
- collecting and reviewing data from the trials

The regulated health professional will review the collected data to determine if the equipment or technology supports the student's progress towards goals in the Individual Education Plan and/or increases access to the curriculum.

Step 3: YRDSB Professional Report (supporting SEA claim):

The Board's regulated health professional writes a report called a SEA Professional Report. The report will state if the equipment is currently recommended for your child through SEA funding.

The regulated health professional will share a copy of this report with families. The In-School Team meets to discuss how to integrate the equipment into instruction and assessment. If families consent, the regulated health professional will start the SEA claim.

How does my child get their equipment?

The Ministry of Education provides funding for SEA claims. York Region District School Board (YRDSB) must follow these Ministry guidelines to get funding for individual SEA claims.

1. The regulated health professional writes the SEA Professional Report and starts a SEA claim.
2. The school SERT and Principal submit the SEA claim to Regional Student Services at the school board.
3. The claim goes through the regional approval process. Student Services reviews SEA claims to ensure Ministry requirements are met.
4. The equipment is ordered, set up and delivered to the student.

It is important to note that this process may take a few months.

For additional information about SEA, please connect with your child's school administrator.



How does my child learn to use the equipment?

- After the equipment is set up, training will be provided for the student, school staff, and/or families as required.
- This training may be provided by regulated health professionals or a third-party training provider.
- Software training is booked by the school.
- Families are invited and encouraged to attend the student-focussed training sessions.

Your child's Individual Education Plan will be updated to include how the equipment will be used to support their learning and assessment.

School and Board staff, including the SERT and classroom teacher, will continue to monitor the use of the SEA equipment for effectiveness.

When equipment is easily transportable and supports learning outside of school, the equipment can be taken home by the student. Families are responsible for the equipment when taken home.

What happens when a student changes schools?

Students can keep their SEA equipment if:

- they attend a publically-funded elementary or secondary school in Ontario, and
- they are receiving special education support, and
- if the student still needs the equipment to access learning.

Moves to another YRDSB school:

School Board staff are responsible for ensuring the transfer of equipment and/or assistive technology from one YRDSB school to another.

Moves to a publicly funded school in Ontario outside of YRDSB:

The receiving School Board is responsible for requesting the transfer of the equipment and/or assistive technology.

SEA equipment and assistive technology does not transfer to post-secondary institutions, employment settings, private schools, Home Schooling or outside the province of Ontario.