

Section B

Special Education Programs and Services

1. The Board's General Model for Special Education
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies
4. The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals
5. Educational and Other Assessments
6. Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings
7. Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities
8. Special Education Placements Provided by the Board
9. Individual Education Plans
10. Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario
11. Special Education Staff
12. Staff Development
13. Equipment
14. Accessibility of School Buildings
15. Transportation
16. Transition Planning



SECTION B1

THE BOARD'S
GENERAL MODEL FOR
SPECIAL EDUCATION



OUR VISION

Faith and Learning...Celebrating the Journey

BOARD MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Catholic School Board. We serve our students, working with the home, parish and school community to:

- Nurture a Christ-centred environment;
- Provide student-focused learning opportunities;
- Support the growth of the whole person.

We Believe In...

- The sacredness and dignity of each individual, and their right to be treated with fairness, integrity and compassion.
- The richness and permanency of our Christ-centred learning environments, which give witness to our Catholic faith, provide living examples and promote social justice.
- The inclusion of all our learners and stakeholders within our programs, services and operations.
- Providing learning opportunities that nurture each individual's gifts, self worth, potential and independence through the provision of relevant learning experiences that are founded on core values, achievable goals and objectives, and a celebration of the joy of learning.
- Creating an organizational culture that is caring, recognizes the contributions and achievements of its members, supports innovation and creativity, and constantly strives to enhance the learning opportunities and experiences provided through leadership development, continuous improvement and stakeholder dialogue.
- The importance of working collaboratively with all of our stakeholders in achieving the most effective learning opportunities and outcomes for our learners.
- The importance of the home, parish and school community relationship as the basis to support Catholic education for our learners.
- The provision of learning environments that are safe, welcoming, accessible, support the curriculum, and which are reflective of and valued by the communities served.
- Being stewards of the traditions and resources that we are provided, and in being responsible for our actions and decisions.
- Decision-making that allows open input and dialogue involving a diversity of stakeholder opinions which is transparent and equitable.
- Valuing and supporting all who work and study at the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board and seeking to create an environment in which they can aspire to excellence and success. The realization of our system objectives depends on the people of Huron-Perth.
- Developing and implementing a distinctive Catholic curriculum based on the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

THE BOARD'S GENERAL MODEL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Purpose of the Standard

To provide the ministry and the public with information on the board's philosophy and service-delivery model for the provision of special education programs and services.

Philosophy of Special Education Services

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board's philosophy of inclusion is intrinsically linked to our Catholic faith and the core beliefs outlined in *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6 (2005)*.

In the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, every effort is made to ensure that students have the opportunity to attend their home school with their age-appropriate peers. Hence, it is critical that students be included in the school community to the highest degree of independence possible. Meaningful inclusion means that students are an intrinsic part of the school community and are provided with opportunities for personal growth through a carefully planned and judiciously executed program. Such experiences will provide for active participation in the school community. The educators must make every effort to develop the full potential of every child.

We believe that....

- All students educated in our schools have the right to learn, to live and to contribute as responsible Catholics in society
- The Board is committed to the principle that all students registered within its schools shall be welcomed into their home school
- Every student has an inherent right to a caring, effective and inclusive education
- The home classroom shall be the regular classroom with appropriate support
- All students have a right to participate fully in opportunities for learning and growth appropriate to their needs, abilities and gifts
- A recognition and celebration of individual differences and unique gifts is to be encouraged and supported among pupils, parents and staff of this Catholic school board
- Parents, as prime educators of their children, will be consulted in determining the appropriate program for their child and receive ongoing information regarding their child's progress
- Effective and ongoing communication among parents/guardians and school/system staff is critical for the development of a relationship of trust and mutual respect
- Shared responsibility among teachers, parents, students, school and system staff will enhance the participation of exceptional students in the school community
- That the Ontario Curriculum is designed for all students and that instructional practices must reflect the abilities, needs, interests and learning styles of students of both genders and all racial, linguistic and ethno-cultural groups
- In the school community, each individual member is valued, diversity is celebrated as the norm, people are of equal worth, relationships are of mutual benefit, and belonging is nurtured
- That inclusive education is one of the foundations on which our philosophy of Catholic education is built

Inclusive Education in Catholic Schools

The following principles are founded on Catholic teachings and take into consideration the reality that learning communities today reflect a multitude of student needs that influence learning and respect the dignity of all.

Family, Faith and Community

- The Catholic tradition teaches that human beings grow and achieve fulfillment through community
- All students benefit from opportunities to give as well as to receive assistance and service
- Relationships support the pursuit of the common good
- Parent(s)/guardian(s), as primary caregivers, make a life-long commitment to the care and well-being of their children
- Active involvement of the family helps to ensure continuity and understanding of the student's needs and learning

Home & School Partnership: The Heart of the Community

- The neighbourhood school, where brothers, sisters and neighbours attend, is the heart of the community
- A sense of belonging to a community is essential for the development of self-esteem and self-confidence
- In their home school students have more opportunities to build meaningful and reciprocal relationships, which may develop into friendships and long lasting community connections
- Staff have a responsibility to support genuine friendship in schools by playing an active role in providing opportunities for relationships to develop
- School cultures value differences and diversity through a spirit of understanding and acceptance
- The partnership among the home, school and parish/community allows for enriched learning
- All members of a school community play a role in supporting the educators

Collaborative Partnerships & Informed Leadership

- The system delivery model provides for a process that strengthens collaborative partnerships between various stakeholders
- Staff have a responsibility to provide an accepting and safe environment that enables students to take risks, and ask for help in order to acquire the skills, procedures and strategic knowledge that will enable them to become independent learners. The ability to provide appropriate support and services for students is enhanced through strong and focused partnerships
- Educators are called to model professional knowledge and skills
- Those who assume leadership roles are called to empower others in their efforts to serve the school community
- Engagement in learning requires shared and distributed leadership

High Expectations for Every Student

- ALL STUDENTS CAN ACHIEVE HIGH STANDARDS, given appropriate time and support
- Students are members of age-appropriate classrooms
- Students have access to necessary modifications and accommodations
- All students shall be taught at their optimal level of instruction and be given varied opportunities to participate in meaningful ways
- Students are able to reach learning expectations in different ways
- Dignity is maintained through the demonstration that every student has value and every student's value is equal

Programming for Every Student

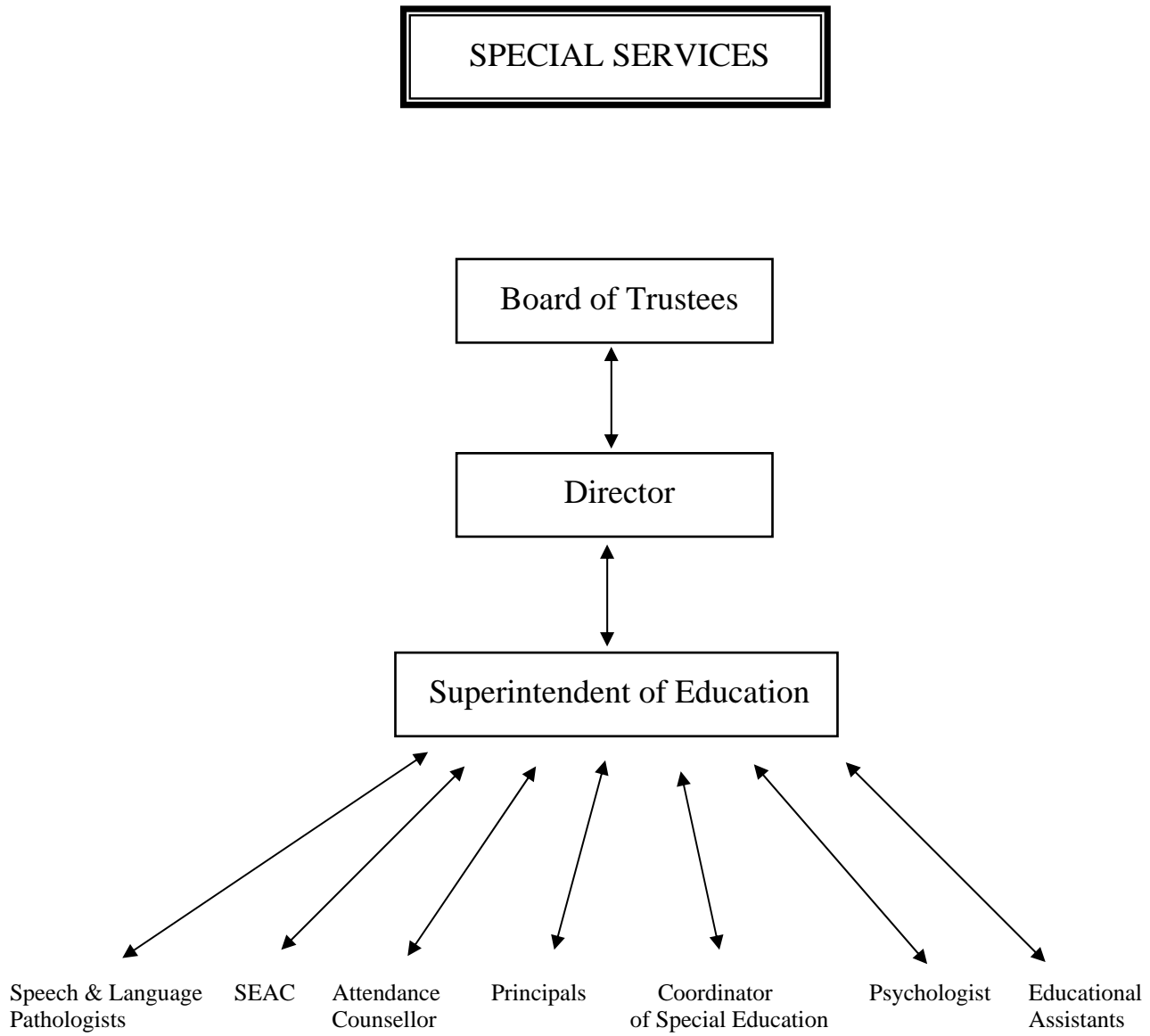
- The educator is responsible for the instruction, assessment and evaluation of each student
- The educator must employ a variety of teaching and learning strategies based on research
- Access to differentiated levels of support is provided as required
- The educator employs the use of individualized programming and meaningful learning experiences
- The educator will assist every student to prepare for the highest degree of independence possible

Effective Communication and Meaningful Contributions:

- Healthy relationships are created within an environment of trust
- Communication requires the mutual and accurate sharing of information
- Members of the school community provide and give constructive feedback to one another
- Maintaining confidentiality is critical for sustaining open and ongoing communication
- The active involvement of families in the transition process (ex: grade to grade, school to school) will facilitate positive growth and development for students
- The knowledge and skills of every staff member is recognized and considered
- All members of the school staff have a shared responsibility to contribute to understanding and responding to the needs of students

This special education plan has been designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and regulations made under the act and other relevant legislation.

ORGANIZATION/ACCOUNTABILITY



MODEL FOR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

The classroom teacher is responsible for planning and carrying out instruction for each student in his or her classroom based on the individual's present level of functioning, strengths and needs.

Assistance for the classroom teacher in determining what needs to be done and how to do it is provided through a variety of supports at the school and system levels. Recognizing that meeting individual needs is a complex task, we recommend that a problem-solving approach be taken by all those engaged in a collaborative team approach to planning and carrying out the individual educational plans. Students, parents, teachers, principals and support staff must all work toward common goals. Open, on-going and frequent communication is critical to the process of planning and carrying out personalized educational plans for students.

The following is an outline of how the process could take place. Naturally, there will be some variation in individual cases.

Step 1:

The classroom teacher has concerns about a student's progress. This could be academic, social, emotional or behavioural. After attempting to deal with the concern him/herself, the teacher decides to talk to the resource teacher. The classroom teacher fills out the School Team Meeting Request Form indicating the concern, what has been tried and the student's general performance and gives it to the resource teacher.

Step 2:

The classroom teacher, principal, and resource teacher meet, as planned, and discuss the concern. The meeting focuses on strategies which could be tried. They agree on one or two strategies which they will attempt to implement. Each agrees what he/she will do and for how long (e.g. 6 - 8 weeks). Record information on Record of School/System Team Meeting.

Step 3:

The classroom teacher implements strategies agreed upon and keeps the resource teacher informed regarding outcomes. The resource teacher checks with the classroom teacher once or twice regarding progress.

Step 4:

At the end of trial period, classroom teacher, principal, and resource teacher meet again to assess situation. At this time they may decide: (i) the situation has improved and end the process or; (ii) try further strategies and continue process at this level. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be implemented at this time.

Step 5:

If the concern appears to be ongoing or the student is making little progress a decision to obtain an individual assessment might be made. Consent for Service and Access to the Ontario School Record (OSR) would be sent home for a signature before proceeding. After testing is completed another school team meeting is held to discuss results.

Step 6:

Update IEP, choose to refer for psycho-educational assessment, or choose to call an IPRC. If IPRC referral is made the TEAMWORK - Special Education Procedures - A Guide for Parents, Guardians and Students handbook must be sent to parents a minimum of 15 days prior to IPRC meeting date.

SCHOOL TEAM MEETING

School Team

Mandatory Members

- Principal, Vice Principal(or designate*)
- Teacher
- Special Education Resource Teacher

Optional Members

- Head of Special Education/Guidance (secondary)
- Parent/Guardian
- Program Support Team (Coordinator or Consultant)
- Psychological Services (Psychologist or Psychometrist)
- Community Agencies (if involved)
- Educational Assistant
- School Based Social Worker

The School Team is an in-school problem solving group that meets to assist classroom teachers to plan for individual children for whom solutions have not been reached working alone or with the special education resource teacher. The School Team concept recognizes the shared responsibility for children within the school and the need to collaborate with colleagues to find solutions to complex issues in today's schools.

The principal schedules these meetings regularly to discuss those cases referred by any member of the team. The resource teacher coordinates the schedule of cases to be discussed and keeps minutes of the meetings. The principal or designate chairs the meeting and may invite consultants, coordinators, parent/guardian or community resource persons to attend, if necessary.

The format of School Team meetings is informal but narrowly focused on specific concerns and practical approaches to solving the problem. Decisions are recorded in the minutes and dates when follow-up will occur.

*Designate must hold the same qualifications as a school principal.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SCHOOL TEAM MEMBERS

Classroom Teacher

- a) to program for individual needs of students in classroom
- b) to call a meeting with resource teacher for program assistance
- c) to provide a written summary of student needs and modifications tried to date
- d) to participate in the problem-solving process at School Team Meeting for students in classroom
- e) to collaborate with the resource teacher informally and frequently regarding students being tracked on the Record of School/System Team Meeting

Resource Teacher

- a) to document on the Record of School/System Team Meeting and continue on-going tracking
- b) to collaborate with the classroom teacher to design a personalized classroom program (strategies, techniques, resources)
- c) informal assessment
- d) inform *principal of need for a School Team Meeting
- e) to participate in the problem-solving process at all School Team Meetings and record minutes
- f) to collaborate with the classroom teacher informally and frequently regarding students being tracked on the Record of School/System Team Meeting and to record outcomes at regular intervals

*Principal and Designate

- a) to call School Resource Team meeting and act as chairperson
- b) to facilitate the problem-solving process regarding students referred to School Team Meeting
- c) to request formal assessment and parental permission if needed
- d) to initiate System Team Meeting if required
- e) to convene IPRC Meeting if necessary
- f) to monitor process of tracking by resource teacher and classroom teacher for all students on the Record of School/System Team Meeting

*Designate must hold the same qualifications as a school principal.

SYSTEM TEAM MEETING

System Team

Mandatory Members

- *Principal, Vice Principal (or designate)
- Teacher
- Special Education Resource Teacher
- Special Education Coordinator(or designate)
- Parent/Guardian

Optional Members

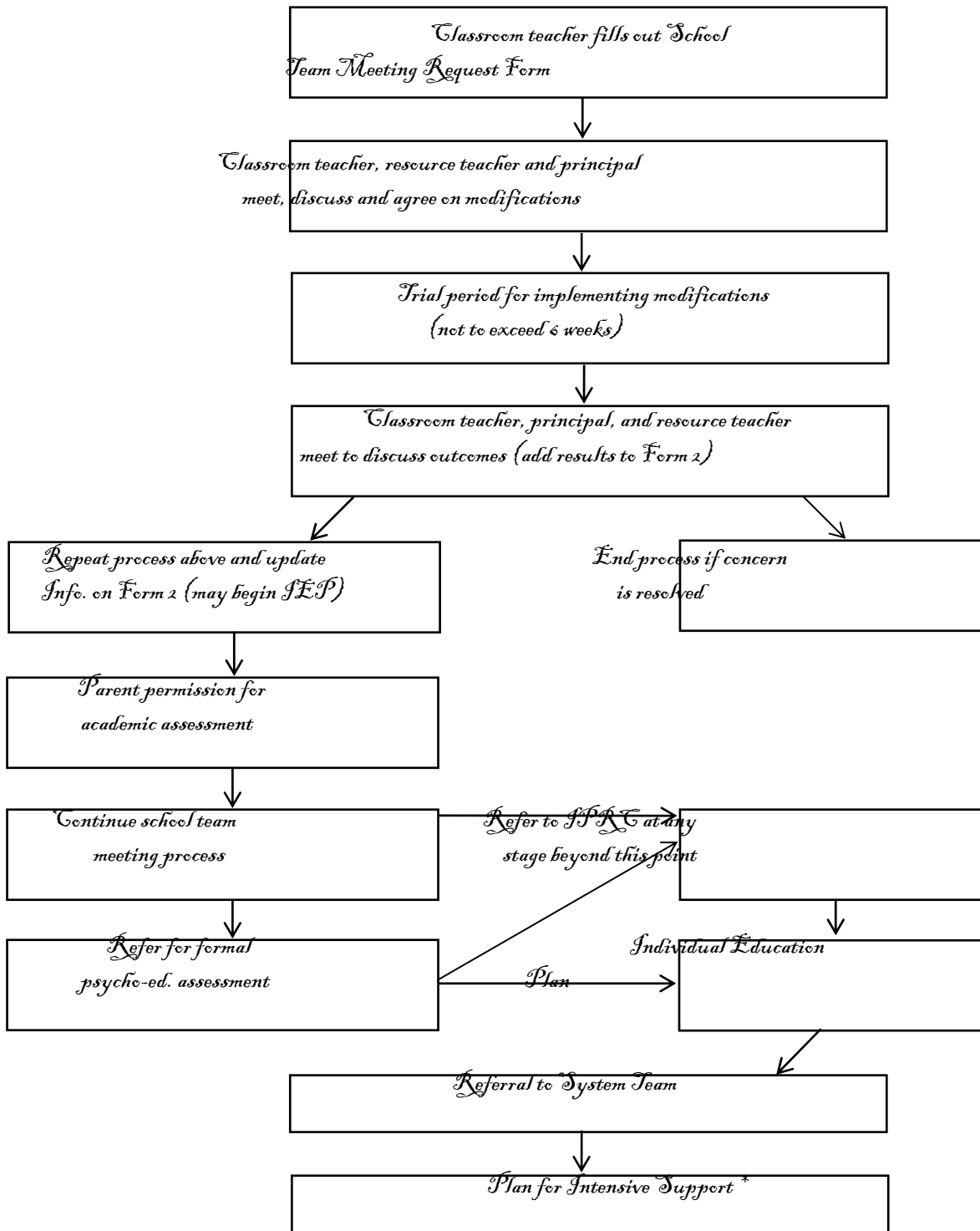
- Head of Special Education/Guidance (secondary)
- Program Support Team (System SERT)
- Superintendent of Education
- Psychological Services (Psychologist or Psychometrist)
- Community Agencies (if involved)
- Educational Assistant
- School Based Social Worker

The System Team should be called on when it is clear that the concerns will require system personnel's involvement because of resources or expertise required. A Referral to System Team should be completed and sent to the Special Education Coordinator who will initiate the meeting.

The System Team meeting is chaired by the principal or designate and focuses on the issues to be discussed in a problem-solving mode. A record will be kept by the resource teacher in the same format as described for the School Team.

*Designate must hold the same qualifications as a school principal.

MODEL FOR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE



* May include accessing external resources and community partners

(Optional programs available in some of our schools)

Circle of Friends

A circle of friends is something that many of us take for granted unless we do not have one. A circle of friends provides us with a network of support of family and friends. In the absence of a naturally formed circle of friends, teacher can facilitate a circle process, which can be used to enlist the involvement and commitment of peers around an individual student. For a student who is not well connected or does not have an extensive network of friends, the circle of friends process can be helpful. Potential peer buddies should be asked to fill out their own circles as well as the student for whom the circle is going to be formed.

Peer Tutors/Ministry

Peer ministry and peer tutoring are programs offered at our two high schools. This service allows senior students to assist teachers and their students with classroom curriculum. They can assist the identified students with accommodations such as scribing, skill development, reading and monitoring homework. Often these students become senior mentors to the students with whom they work.

Volunteers

Schools are encouraged to partner with the community by inviting volunteers into the school to work with remedial students, general classroom assistance, and in the library or computer lab. Volunteers are assigned to carry out various tasks depending on the area in which they are asked to work. Volunteers work as part of a team.

Rainbow Program

For students who are living in single parents families, step parent families or families that are going through painful transitions. Caring, trained adults help these children through their grief to build a stronger sense of self-esteem and begin to accept what has taken place in the family. These children come together to discuss various topics in relation to the change in his/her family unit such as SELF, TRUST, ANGER, FAMILY, GOD – there are 16 in all. The children share their feelings through the vehicle of activities, games and discussions.

Peacemaker Program/Virtues Program

The peacemaker program is a way in which we attempt to improve the social tone of the school as we help children develop the language and social skills they need to solve everyday problems and become increasingly able to work and learn together. As the children acquire and refine language for negotiation peer mediation becomes the method for finding resolutions that combines the needs of the parties in conflict instead of compromising those needs. It is a way for students to deal with differences without coercion. Peer mediation works well to resolve conflict in schools because through it students gain power. The more students become empowered to resolve their differences peacefully, the more responsibly they behave. Peer mediation is voluntary. Students may request mediation when they are involved in a dispute, or they may be referred by teachers, administrators, or parents. When both parties agree to mediate, an assigned peer mediator arranges a meeting with the students.

Student Tutor

Secondary school students may choose to serve as tutors, to complete their community service requirements. They will work with an elementary student for a minimum of 10 hours, to help them with their academic needs. The responsibility of the secondary school students will be to identify their interest in a tutoring opportunity. They will get the information sheet from their Religion teacher. They will call the elementary teacher, and if still interested, call the parent to make arrangements for the tutoring sessions.

In-School Mentoring Program

South Huron Big Brothers/Big Sisters and local school boards support the In-School Mentoring Program to contribute to the healthy development of children by providing a quality one-to-one adult volunteer relationship. This school-based program is designed to improve the child's self-esteem, personal and academic growth, and concern/respect for the community. The volunteer (18 years of age and over) and student (7 to 10 years of age) are matched according to suitability and need by school. The volunteer and student meet for one hour each week during school hours, at the child's school, for the duration of the school year.

P.e.e.r. Pals Program

In school settings, where social interactions are crucial components for success, students with autism often have difficulties with peer interactions and social situations. (P.E.E.R. -Peers establishing effective relationships)

These characteristics affect one's ability to form relationships with peers because the ability to perform socially is essential to many of the achievements one will obtain (Barnhill, 2002). In fact, The National Research Council states that the two most critical skills for children with autism to obtain are social skills and independence (Lord & McGee, 2001). A number of social skill programs for students with autism have been developed, however, peer-mediated strategies have been studied extensively and have been found to be very effective in enhancing social skills. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that inclusion alone, or pure exposure to typically developing peers, is not sufficient enough to produce social skills change (Laushey & Heflin, 2000; McConnell, 2002). Instead, active approaches are needed in order to teach these skills.

The P.E.E.R. Pals Program has been developed to do just that. It meets the needs of many (not just students with ASD), promotes generalization and enhances leadership skills, ownership and sustainability as it is delivered as a school-wide program.

The P.E.E.R. Pals Program has two components.

1. The Classroom Component: Grounded in research, this component involves teaching same-aged peers to effectively use behavioural strategies that promote positive interactions as well as specific social skills. Educators are trained to identify and reinforce the skills taught during the academic school day.
2. The Recess Component: In order to maximize all opportunities to promote social interactions senior students are trained to facilitate structured games and activities during recess. This provides a venue for students to use the skills taught in natural settings.