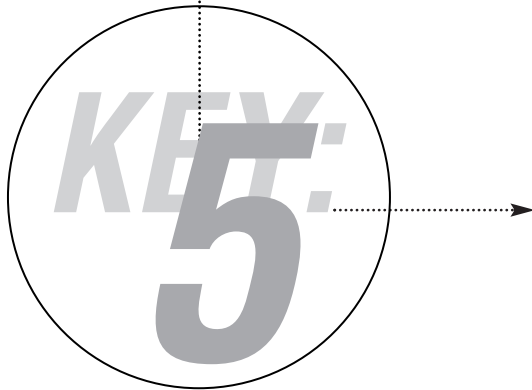


## Key Components of Programming for Students with Learning Disabilities



# Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)

Individualized program plans (IPPs) are written commitments of intent by education teams to ensure appropriate planning for exceptional students. They are working documents and records of student progress.

IPPs are:

- collaborative team efforts involving students, parents, regular education teachers and resource personnel
- based on a belief in individualized programming and developed to address the specific needs of individual learners
- instructional guides for teachers
- administrative documents which help monitor and evaluate students' educational progress and programs
- guides for transition planning.

## Strategies to Facilitate Effective IPPs

IPPs are most effective when they are used actively and on an ongoing basis. Strategies to facilitate the IPP process are outlined below.

### ► Enhancing the collaborative team

- Actively involve parents in the IPP process.
  - Seek parental input prior to IPP conferences; e.g., send home a form seeking information about parent goals, children's preferences, etc. (See Appendix 7, pages 84–85, for a sample form.)
  - Discuss how and when parents want to be involved in their children's education programs, and how they want to be kept informed.
  - Assist parents in preparing for IPP meetings.
  - Create a draft IPP and invite meaningful input from parents. Make changes and additions with their input. (Putting a signature on a finalized IPP with no opportunity for input may be discouraging to some parents.)
  - Provide parents with a copy of the IPP to facilitate their support at home and as a working copy for their observations.
  
- Actively involve students in the IPP process with increasing participation as students mature.
  - Involve students in setting goals and evaluating progress to increase ownership and motivation.
  - Involve students in IPP conferences, as appropriate.
  - Support students in taking responsibility for describing their needs and seeking appropriate support. (For more information about helping students communicate in the IPP process, see Appendix 8, page 86.)
  
- Involve appropriate school personnel in developing IPPs.
  - All school personnel involved in providing instruction for students with learning disabilities should be involved in

developing IPPs. There is growing recognition that regular classroom teachers are better able to use IPPs as instructional guides when they are involved in developing them.

- IPPs are most effective when viewed in the context of an active problem-solving process, which can be facilitated by an organizational structure; e.g., Student Support Team Model, that provides a forum for ongoing team planning.
- Provide professional development and guidance for teachers to increase understanding of the purpose and structure of IPPs.
- Encourage support for the IPP process; e.g., time for involvement, communication, access to additional expertise.

### ► Individualizing IPPs

- Focus on the individual needs of students, not on the categorical label. Avoid a generic list of accommodations because individuals with learning disabilities vary widely in their strengths and needs.
- Consider students' academic, cognitive and processing strengths. How can instruction build on strengths?
- Consider the appropriate balance for individual students. Each student should participate in the regular curriculum as much as possible with accommodations to support success. Students may also need additional instruction to develop skills and strategies.
- Use multiple sources of assessment data to determine strengths and needs.
- Consider students' needs beyond academics, such as social and behaviour needs.
- Focus on key goals for the individual student.
- Make collaborative, comprehensive transition plans well in advance of anticipated transitions.

### ► Using IPPs

- IPPs need to be accessible working documents to be useful for ongoing instruction and monitoring. Some teachers keep them in binders in their desks for planning lessons and noting observations.

- If there are several teachers responsible for a student's education program, it is important to develop procedures for all teachers to have access to the IPP so they can use it to plan instruction, monitor progress, and contribute to evaluating and changing goals and objectives.

► **Monitoring student progress**

- Use diverse assessment and evaluation strategies to demonstrate and communicate student progress.
- Monitor progress frequently. If objectives are met, set new ones. If the student is not demonstrating progress, review the program and make changes.
- Use IPPs as working documents. Record, note or attach assessment information.
- Make changes and additions as required.

► **Guiding transition planning**

- Collaborative, comprehensive transition plans should be included in IPPs. (See section on Transition Planning, pages 35–40.)

## Outcomes

The outcomes below describe potential results from implementing the strategies, activities and practices in this section.

- Parents, school staff and students fully understand the goals and specific objectives in IPPs.
- IPPs are developed by people who have knowledge of individual students and who will be providing services to those students.
- Teachers demonstrate and communicate student growth in learning.

- IPPs are revised to reflect the changing needs of students.
- Instruction is guided by student needs as identified in IPPs.
- Strategies for transitions identified in IPPs are implemented.

### **Connections** to Other Alberta Learning Resources

- See the following sections in *Individualized Program Plans* (Alberta Education, 1995), Book 3 of the *Programming for Students with Special Needs* series:
  - Section II: Essential Information, page IPP.3
  - Section III: The IPP Process, pages IPP.4–IPP.49.
- See Parent Involvement in the IPP Process, page GT.76 in *Teaching Students who are Gifted and Talented* (Alberta Learning, 2000), Book 7 of the *Programming for Students with Special Needs* series.

