

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK



He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no
might he increases strength. Isaiah 40:29

CHEK ABC SPECAIL EDUCATION PROGRAM

CHEK ABC promotes an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners. Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs.

Special services and educational needs make it necessary to provide an educational program with resources that support and aide in the student's learning. The needs of each student is identified through consultation with the parents, professional reports and assessments and past school records. CHEK ABC adheres to BC Ministry of Education Special Education Services as outline in the Special Education Services, A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines (April 2016).

A student learning plan is put into place using the Ministry of Education Instructional tool and recorded in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Special needs students work under all applicable requirements of the CHEK ABC program (inclusion) as we adhere to the Ministry of Education guidelines which are in place for all accredited BC schools.

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DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Special Needs: a student who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, has a learning disability or special gift or talent.

SE: Special Education

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

EA: Special Education Teacher Assistant

Adapted: the regular program of studies is pursued and the learning outcomes are retained but teaching and assessment strategies are designed to accommodate the student's special needs.

Different formats such as Braille and books on tape may be used. Instructional strategies such as the use of interpreters, visual cues and aids may be employed. Also, assessment procedures like oral exams, additional time, scribes, readers and assistive technologies may be necessary. A letter grade or percentage is used to indicate academic progress.

Modified: the learning outcomes are altered and directly related to practical knowledge for daily living. Letter grades and percentages are replaced with comments on student ability, ways to support learning and where further attention is needed.

In some cases, a student's program may include both "adapted" and "modified" courses.

IDENTIFYING SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS/REFERRAL PROCESS

A student may gain entry into the Special Education program by:

- Teacher referral if they are currently an active student at CHEK ABC or
- SE Program Coordinator or SE teachers if they are newly applying

The process of admission to the CHEK ABC Special Education program is as follows:

1. A complete enrolment application is submitted online and processed by the central office. A complete application includes:
 - Online forms completed
 - Birth certificate
 - Supporting documentation submitted (existing IEP's, assessments, reports, Report Cards, etc.)
2. The Special Education department reviews the application and all supporting documentation
3. An interview is conducted by the Special Education program coordinator with the family
4. The Special Education department recommends the student for acceptance to the K-9 or High School Administrator at CHEK ABC.
5. Administration approves the acceptance.

CHEK ABC will not accept Special Education students in the following situations:

- All supporting documentation is not provided
- The family does not support the philosophy of the CHEK ABC special education program nor Christian Education
- The family does not intend to be actively involved in their child's DL (distributed learning) program
- The needs of the student are beyond what the CHEK ABC Special Education department feels that it can support
- We do not have a local teacher or ability to recruit an Education Assistant in the area where the student/family resides

ADMITTANCE TO THE CHEK ABC SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Special Education Department works with teachers to identify students with special needs as early as possible so that their programs may be adapted or modified to meet their needs. A three-tiered response to intervention model is followed:

Tier 1:

1. A teacher becomes aware of a student who demonstrates exceptionalities in learning and/or behaviour through work samples, interactions with the student, concerns expressed by the parents, and/or universal screening test results.
2. The teacher gathers more information to gain a better understanding of student needs. This may include, but is not limited to, level A assessments (such as a CAT test, etc), reading inventories, assessment portfolios, and a meeting with the parent.
3. The teacher contacts the Special Needs SE teacher who will assist in gathering more information in order to make suggestions for differentiated instruction, observations of implementation of strategies, and/or further curriculum-based assessment (Level A) that may include assessment portfolios. Parents are informed of the updated strategies to be used and instruction on how to implement those strategies will be provided by the teacher.
4. If the student of concern is not making progress after a predetermined trial period (4-12 weeks), then the teacher completes a formal referral for Tier 2 special education services. This form, Teacher's Referral for Education Support, can be found on the drive under the following pathway: CHEKABC TEACHER/SPED FOR CONSULTANTS/REFERRAL PROCESS STUDENTS TO SPED DEPT/SPED REFERRAL FORM. This referral is sent by email to the Special Education Department at sped@chekabc.ca.

Tier 2:

1. The referral submitted by the teacher formally invites the school-based team into the process of supporting the child.
2. The SE teacher, in cooperation with the SE Coordinator, principal, and any relevant outside professionals, will review the file and offer further teaching strategies and to plan for any additional services or support that may be offered to the student. Parents and students will review.

3. The SE teacher will create an accommodation support plan, outlining the targeted strategies to help the student achieve academic success. The student's progress will be monitored throughout the course of the term.
4. The SE teacher may use Level B assessments to evaluate students' academic strengths and weaknesses. The SE teacher may request the family take the child to the doctor for assessment to rule out any medical causes of the student's academic challenges.
5. The Special Needs teacher will follow up with the teacher and parents again at the end of term to access feedback about the strategies and if they are working or not. If the student is not showing significant progress, the school-based team may recommend extended assessments.

Tier 3:

1. The decision to seek assessment and diagnosis by a medical professional and/or Level C assessment for more in-depth analysis of learning begins Tier 3. Results from these assessments may lead to a Special Education designation that will require a detailed IEP in order to address the learning needs of the student.
2. The Special Needs teacher will review the results of the assessment and meet with the, parents, and student, if relevant, to summarize the most pertinent recommendations of the professional reports and to collaborate together on creating an IEP. Specific adaptations and/or modifications will be put into place, and learning resources recorded. Community support personnel and programs will be accessed with parent consent. For a few students, provincial agencies may be requested (ex: POPARD, PISP, SET BC).
3. IEP reviews will be conducted in alignment with report card writing to ensure that learning outcomes are relevant with current resources and services. The Final June IEP Review will be more detailed than preceding IEP Reviews.
4. If the family determines they do not want to move forward with an assessment, IHCAN or doctor referral, the student will be kept as a regular student and placed on the watch list.

CHEK ABC SCHOOL BASED TEAM

CHEK ABC employs a school based team approach to meet the needs of students in the Special Education Department. Each team member contributes to developing and overseeing the IEP and educational programming of the student.

•**The Special Education Program Coordinator** - The SE Program Coordinator of CHEK ABC is responsible for all special needs students in the program. The Program Coordinator, in conjunction with the Principal, SE Teacher and teacher, is responsible for the coordination, documentation and implementation of educational programs including the IEP. The Program Coordinator ensures the professional services are in place as outlined in the IEP.

•**The Special Education Teacher** - The SE teacher is an educator who is professionally qualified in the area of special needs. She/he assists in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the IEP; recruiting and overseeing support and community services; reviewing and preparing funding applications and student budgets; and may administer specialized tests, if required.

The SE teacher works directly with the student and parent and is responsible for designing, supervising and assessing the educational program for the student. The SE teacher works directly with the Education Assistant in the development and oversight of the IEP and directs support and community services, when required. The SE teacher is responsible for the informal assessment of the student. This includes systematic observation, file review, interview with the parent, and some assessment to determine academic skill development, strength and weaknesses in learning processes and social/adaptive functioning. The SE teacher conducts the educational program in accord with all applicable policies, procedures and regulations that govern the Distributed Learning program as outlined in CHEK ABC documents which adhere to Ministry of Education Standards.

- **Parents** – Parents are responsible for the day to day teaching of their child. Parents provide the school personnel in-depth knowledge of their child and assist in the planning, development, and implementation of the educational program. Parents are informed concerning required access to technology, technical competence required of the student, the components and expectations of the program and the learning and support services available through the program.
- **Students** - Some students are called upon to contribute to the process of assessment and planning for their own educational programs and contribute as they are able.
- **Community Personnel** – Community resources are accessed when specialized professionals are needed to determine matters that are outside the expertise of the educational staff. These include, but are not limited to Speech Pathologists, Occupational/Physical Therapists, Behaviour Interventionists, Psychiatrists, Pediatricians and Counsellors. They may provide a necessary service for the student to pursue educational goals and work in the interests of the student.
- **Education Assistant (EA)** – If a student qualifies for extra funding, an education assistant may be hired or contracted in order to work directly with a student towards the goals identified in the IEP. A regular schedule and meeting place is determined and agreed upon by all parties. One parent or responsible adult must be present when an EA is scheduled to attend to the student's home and remain at home for the duration of the EA session.

THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) AS A DOCUMENT FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

All Special Needs students will have an IEP. IEP development includes consultation with the Education Assistant, parents, and if appropriate, the student, who is involved in its planning, development and implementation.

The essential elements of an IEP are the following: (as applicable)

1. Current strengths and needs.
2. Present levels of educational performance and goals with measurable objectives for each goal.
3. Strategies to meet the goals which are set at high but attainable levels.
4. A list of adapted or modified materials, instruction or assessment methods.
5. A list of support services as needed by the student.
6. Setting where the educational program is provided.

7. The names of all the personnel who will be providing the educational program and support services.
8. Period of time and process for the review of the IEP.
9. Evidence of evaluation and review - revisions and tracking of achievement.
10. Plans for the next transition point in the student's education.

Parent's Role in Fulfilling the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The developing of an IEP for a specially funded student is a consultative process that involves the parents in planning the educational program. Part of the process involves an agreement with the parents as to their part in assisting to reach the goals.

- A. There must be a written agreement between CHEK ABC and the parent that indicates a clear understanding of the relationship between the school and the home especially as it relates to the parent's responsibility in the Distributed Learning program. This includes: providing instruction in the student's courses as outlined in the SLPs (Student Learning Plan), working with the child to achieve the goals outlined in the IEP, and communicating regularly with the teacher and SE consultant regarding the student's progress. The parent's role is the same whether or not an Educational Assistant is hired.
- B. Adherence to the agreement is fundamental to the successful execution of the student's educational program.

SPECIAL NEEDS CATEGORIES

1) Specially Funded Students

There are eight disabilities that qualify for extra funding from the Ministry of Education that a student may qualify for, to help meet educational needs. If a student meets the requirements for one of these categories, a budget is created in conjunction with the CHEK ABC SE Program Coordinator, Teacher, teacher and family. The budget reflects what is required to meet the educational needs of the student as outlined in the IEP. CHEK ABC provides this needs based program and ensures the delivery of appropriate services and resources to each individual family. All supports must aid in the students learning.

The eight disabilities which qualify for extra funding are as follows:

- Level One Code A Funding - Dependent Handicapped - Completely dependent on others or meeting all daily living needs. The broad range of intellectual abilities of the student must be recognized as well as the specific educational and health needs and how those needs will be addressed through specific strategies. Medical assessments and health care plans must be taken into consideration.
- Level One Code B funding - Deaf/Blind - Visual and auditory impairment can range from partial sight to total blindness and moderate to profound hearing loss. Current information on vision and hearing, physical development, academic abilities, educational achievement and communicative competence must be on hand.
- Level Two Code C Funding - Moderate to profound intellectual disability - Functions at greater

than 3 standard deviations below the norm on an individually administered Level C assessment instrument of intellectual functioning and there is delayed adaptive behaviour and functioning of similar degree. Adaptive behaviour is defined as “effectiveness or degree to which the individual meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility” and is determined by the use of such tests as the ABAS-3 (Adaptive Behavior Assessment System) and the “Adaptive Behavior Scale.” Intellectual ability is most frequently determined through the use of WISC-V (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) and often pair it with WIAT-III (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test). Such students require support in a number of areas and are delayed in social-emotional development. If there is sensory impairment, physical disability, or medical health needs the support services may include an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, a speech language pathologist and educators as part of the team.

- Level Two Code D Funding - Physically disabled, chronic health impairment - Has one or more of the following: nervous system impairment that impacts movement or mobility -musculoskeletal condition - chronic health impairment that seriously impacts student’s education and achievement. A medical diagnosis is not sufficient in itself to determine need for funding. The condition must significantly affect functioning and education.

- Level Two Code E Funding - Visually Impaired - A student, who in the opinion of a professional in the field of eye care has visual acuity of 6/21 (20/70 or less in the better eye after correction), a visual field of 20 degrees or less, a progressive eye disease with prognosis of becoming one of the above in the next few years or a visual problem or related visual stamina that is not correctable and that results in the student functioning as if his or her visual acuity is limited to 6/21 (20/70) or less.

- Level Two Code F Funding - Deaf/Hearing Impaired - a medically diagnosed hearing loss that results in a substantial education difficulty. The audiological assessment affirms a bilateral hearing loss, a unilateral loss with significant speech/language delay, or a cochlear implant. In unilateral hearing loss there must be significant hearing loss in the affected ear and an annual assessment of impact must be documented.

- Level Two Code G Funding - Autism Spectrum Disorder - A diagnosis of ASD must be made by a qualified professional and must affect educational performance. The categories of this disorder are: Autism Disorder, PDD - NOS/Atypical Autism, Asperger Disorder/Syndrome, Rett Syndrome, or Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.

- Level Three Code H Funding - Intensive Behavioural Interventions/Serious Mental Illness -Intensive behavioural intervention is required when the student exhibits anti-social disruptive behaviour in most environments which is consistent and I. persistent over time. Mental illness is diagnosed by a qualified professional. The illness manifests itself in profound withdrawal or other negative internalizing behaviours. He or she is vulnerable, fragile and “at risk” without extensive support. Students that fit this category need the intervention of other community agencies, are a serious risk to themselves or others, and interfere with their own academic progress and that of others.

In assessing such students, functional behaviour over time should be noted, as well as information from different aspects of the student’s life. Other conditions which may be contributing to the student’s behaviour should be ruled out such as hearing loss, learning disabilities, side effects of medication or the possibility of other medical or health impairments.

2) Regularly Funded Special Needs Students

This level encompasses students who do not qualify for extra funding but DO have a special education determination of some kind. There is a Basic Allocation of funds from within the regular per student grant that is intended to provide special services to these students. Students who might be eligible for this funding need appropriate assessment and documentation and an IEP. The teacher, in consultation with the SE Administrator, ensures that the criteria for funding are met. The Principal approves the funding and determines the amount to be allotted based on a recommendation from the SE Administrator and on a case by case basis.

These unfunded designations fall into the following categories:

1. Learning Disabilities (Code Q) - Students with average ability but who have difficulty in acquiring basic academic skills and consequently experience academic under-achievement or achievement that can only be gained by very high levels of effort and support. The teacher in this case observes, evaluates, keeps anecdotal records and introduces variations in instructional approaches documenting the measure of success. The teacher may suggest a medical examination of the student by a physician to rule out any medical basis for concerns. If the student continues to experience difficulty, further assessment and intervention strategies may be needed.
2. Mild Intellectual Disabilities (Code K) – Students whose assessment documentation shows that intellectual functioning as well as some adaptive skill areas are two or more standard deviations below the average. The teacher will observe, evaluate, keep anecdotal records and introduce variations in instructional approaches in order to assist the student in reaching academic and social/behavior goals.
3. Gifted Students (Code P) - Students who are gifted have high intellectual ability, notable creativity and/or remarkable skills in certain disciplines. Such students may not be good in everything but they stand out as high achievers. The teacher makes observations, records achievement, consults with the parents and with peers and takes steps to provide differentiated opportunities for the student.
4. Students requiring Behavior Support or those with Mental Illness (Code R) – Students who show aggression, and/or hyperactivity and/or possible psychological issues such as anxiety, stress related disorder, depression, social issues. The teacher works with the family to set up a program that addresses the needs of the student.

USES Program- Unfunded Special Education Students

CHEK ABC recognizes the uniqueness of every student and we believe that all students should have equitable access to education. Students with high incidence special needs designations (K, P, Q, and R), do not qualify for additional funding from the Ministry of Education. However, we recognize the value of additional educational supports for these students. The USES (Unfunded Special Education Students) Program, is designed to provide additional support for these students.

A CHEK ABC Teacher will work with the family to write an IEP for the student and make a plan for additional supports. Additional supports may include: EA time, SLP, OT, BI, counsellors, specialized curriculum, etc. Individuals interested in the program must apply under the Special Education enrollment link. You will be asked to provide professional assessments by qualified professionals to verify the designation. Space is limited and application approval will be based on need and availability of funds.

Some of our students do not meet requirements for extra funding from the BC Ministry of Education but still qualify for additional educational supports. These students may have ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, speech problems, reading and writing difficulties, memory problems, delayed maturation or learn at a very slow rate.

CHEK ABC supports these students by:

- Providing educational support services through CHEK ABC dependent on funds available.
- Implementing an IEP or an Accommodation Support Plan
- Recommending adaptations and strategies as part of regular course programming

3) Learning Assistance Program

The third level indicates students who qualify for an IEP but do not meet the criteria for the other two levels. Students who do not have any testing would start here in order to begin receiving assistance so that further assessment can be done or until they can be categorized in either level one or level two of the program. Some students may never qualify for levels one or two and yet still require an IEP and assistance. Service is provided by our Education Assistance's and the regional teachers who work together to design a program that best suits the needs of the individual student.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

If a student does NOT meet the requirements for any of the three levels of service offered by CHEK ABC, they are placed on a support document where the particular area(s) of academic concern can be addressed. The regional teacher and the family works together to determine what is needed to meet the needs of that student.

DISCLOSURE

If a parent fails to submit or disclose documentation that is necessary, the student may be terminated as a Special Education student and moved to a regularly enrolled or registered status within CHEK ABC. When personal information related to students is communicated, every effort is made to guard the privacy of the information according to the Personal Information Protection Act. CHEK ABC does not collect, use or disclose personal information without the consent of the individual (unless otherwise permitted under the Act).

SPECIALLY FUNDED STUDENTS

Students who are expected to meet the requirements for special funding, according to the categories specified by the Ministry of Education, or have had special funding in the past, are referred to the SE program coordinator.

CHEK ABC employs teachers for special education who have coursework in special education, a degree in special education, or graduate work in special education.

The application process for special funding begins with all necessary documentation being assembled according to Ministry guidelines. This includes current documentation to support diagnosis, current IEP (if applicable) and any other relevant information to the student's case. No action is taken by CHEK ABC in relation to the student in any educational matter or related matter until the application is approved.

A CHEK ABC Confirmation of Eligibility form is completed by the SE SE teacher and filed at central office.

The measure of funding that is granted for a student is assessed and approved by the SE program coordinator.

The SE program coordinator begins the process of assembling a service team (local Teacher and Special Education Teacher) to meet the student's needs. The service team is put together within 30 days.

The SE teacher, in conjunction with the teacher, creates the IEP document which is approved by the principal.

Once the needs have been identified and the IEP has been approved, the Teacher compiles a budget detailing the student's needs using the SPED budget form provided.

The budget is approved before any expenditure is made. All expenditures are in direct relation to the student's learning as outlined by the professional services and goals.

All expenditures are tracked by the Teacher and Teacher and submitted to the SE program coordinator for periodic review and approval for the deletion and addition of services as the year unfolds.

Once the budget has been approved, the dollar amounts can not be changed without informing the SPED coordinator, as these amounts affect the overall budget for the department.

The SE teacher works with the teacher and parent to source professional services within the community, (ie. behaviour intervention, speech therapists etc.) as outlined in the IEP. An EA is recruited and hired. The SE Program Coordinator gives final approval of the services and secures the contracts.

HIGHSCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

CHEK ABC accommodates students in the high school program who have special needs.

- A. Graduation program students who are working towards a School Completion Certificate, are on modified programs, and who may or may not receive special funding, are served by the regional teacher only. Specialist high school teachers are not assigned to students on a modified program.
- B. Students' working towards a Dogwood diploma, who need adaptations, will be provided as written in the IEP.

SPECIALLY FUNDED CROSS-ENROLLED STUDENTS

CHEK ABC does not accept cross-enrolled students who are on modified programs.

Should a student who has special funding with an IEP cross-enroll with CHEK ABC, he/she may be accepted if the course(s) requested are regular courses in which adaptations are required.

- A. The student's school of record is responsible for the IEP and for providing or coordinating supplementary services.
- B. A copy of the IEP is on file at CHEK ABC, and a form is submitted with the grad planner to inform teachers of recommended adaptations.
- C. The school that receives the special education funding, in consultation with the parents, draws up a written agreement which is part of the IEP development, and identifies the roles of each party involved.

SPECIAL NEEDS FUNDING FOR NON-GRADUATED ADULTS

Adult students who have not graduated are eligible for special needs funding if they have special needs under certain circumstances

- Adult students must have been reported on the Form 1701 in the prior school year (i.e. They are continuing their K-12 program uninterrupted from when they were school age)
 - Adult students must be working towards their goals set out in their IEP.
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CRITERIA FOR LEVEL B TESTING

Purpose: Assessments can be helpful for making specific academic recommendations, for IEP planning, monitoring progress and response to intervention, or to obtain more data to support a referral for a psychoeducational assessment.

Criteria for testing:

Non-spced students referred to SPED

- Level B testing is for struggling students who are not making progress with targeted interventions. The student has not responded favourably to interventions with specialized curriculum and teacher recommended interventions.
- Level A testing and or work samples demonstrate the student is a full grade level or two grade levels below achievement in literacy (reading and/or writing) and/or math skills.
- A teacher referral form needs to be filled out and submitted as part of the RTI (Referral to Intervention) process and any level A assessments conducted, or specialized curriculum or interventions used to help the student and family.
- A permission form signed by the parent is required before testing is initiated. This form is sent out by the certified Level B teacher, and it is placed in the students file once signed and returned by the parent.

Level B testing requirements

- The earliest grade for Level B testing would be Grade 3 with the referral to the SPED department near the end of grade 2. Preferred grade for testing is grade 4 and up.
- Level B testing would occur before a psychoeducational assessment is completed. This is determined if achievement is well below grade level on the Level B test.

Students in the SPED department with codes (unfunded or funded)

- If a psychoeducational assessment has been completed and is over 5 years old, the SPED teacher will determine if the student would be better suited for a Level B assessment or an undated psychoeducational assessment after consultation with the SPED coordinator.

***Under special circumstances,** a level B test could be conducted for a specific purpose under the 5-year psychoeducational assessment time limit e.g., transition times. *

- Transition times: an updated psychoeducational assessment may be needed at a transition time (early elementary to middle school, middle school to junior high) if there are presenting concerns.
- A level B test can be requested if the student struggles had been in reading, writing, and/or math and they seem to have overcome those struggles. This is useful for determining if a student will enter the Highschool Evergreen or Dogwood program.