MORNEAU SHEPELL

Children's Support Solutions

Parent guidebook

Helping parents advocate for their child

Parent Guidebook

Helping parents advocate for their child [1]

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to help parents advocate for, document and track the needs of their children who have special needs. This handbook was created as a guidebook to help parents ask questions, get information and record information about their child's needs.

It is our intention that this guidebook will evolve and change as more input is gathered from the parents and families we serve. If you have suggests or comments please forward them to: **childrensupportsolutions@morneaushepell.com**

Child's profile

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Date of Birth: _____

School: _____

Student OEN/MIN: _____

Principal: _____

Current Grade/Special Class: _____

School Year: _____

Most Recent IPRC Date: _____

Exceptionality: _____

1 Adapted from: https://education.alberta.ca/media/352698/learning.pdf

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Meet my child

Areas my child is doing well in:

_____

Signs that indicate my child may be struggling in school and may need more support:

_____

Information I could share about my child's learning needs:

_____

Sample questions I might discuss with my child's teachers about identification and assessment:

- How is my child doing in school this year?
  Do you have any special concerns about his or her learning or behaviour?
- How does the school identify children who may have special learning needs?
- How can I participate in an assessment of my child's learning needs?

Family goal setting

Date: _____

Our child has these five strengths:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Our child has these five areas of need:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Our first goal for our child this school year is:

_____

This is what we will do at home to help achieve this goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Our second goal for our child this school year is:

_____

This is what we will do at home to help achieve this goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We agree to review these goals at each reporting period.

We will review these goals _____

Date _____

My child's learning team

Members of my child's learning team include:

_____

Information about my child that I need to share with the school early in the year:

_____

Ways I can be involved in my child's education at school:

_____

Documents and information I might need to organize:

_____

Ways I can support my child's learning at home:

_____

Groups and people that could be part of my child's community network:

_____

Sample questions I might discuss with my child's teachers about the learning team:

- How can we stay in touch so that I can support the work you are doing in the classroom? What's the best way to reach you?
- Are there guidance counsellors or learning consultants who could provide additional information and consultation on program planning for my child if we need it?
- What are some ways I can help my child at home? How can I reinforce strategies my child is learning and using in class?
- What source do you use for resources that are used with my child?
- Where can I find resources that I can use with my child at home?

Sample questions I might discuss with my child about the learning team:

- Who helps you at school? What kinds of things do they do and say that help you learn?
- When I visit your classroom, what kinds of things do you want me to notice?
- What kinds of things can we do at home to support your learning?
- How long is someone helping you in the classroom? Do you have enough support?
- What is the classroom environment like when there are additional resources in the classroom?
- Are you pulled out of class into a resource room? What is the environment like in the resource room?
- Do you want to be pulled out for a certain amount of minutes in a day for assistance in a resource room?

Notes

My child's diverse learning needs

Information I want to share about my child during IEP development:

_____

Accommodations that work well with my child at home:

_____

Assistive technology I'd like to find out more about:

_____

Sample questions I might discuss with my child's teachers:

- How will you be assessing my child's progress and understanding of concepts in your class?
- What is your understanding of my child's learning strengths and needs?
  How will this affect his or her learning and participation in your class?
- What kinds of accommodations will be available in your classroom?
- What **modifications** will you be making to the curriculum to support my child's learning?
- How often will you monitor my child's goals as they are set out in the IEP?
- Will you collaborate with my child's other teachers to ensure they understand the IEP and how it should be applied to every class/subject?
- Who will monitor whether the tenets of the IEP are being upheld?

Sample questions I might discuss with my child before IPP conferences:

- What do you feel are your successes at school? What is really working for you?
- Are there any problems that we need to find some solutions to? What can be done to make things better?
- What are your goals for this school year?

Notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

My child's social and emotional growth

Encouraging things I can say to my child:

Ways I can support my child's friendships:

Ideas for maintaining my family's sense of hope and togetherness:

Sample questions I might discuss with my child's teachers about friendship and encouragement:

- How does my child get along with other children in the class?
- Have you noticed a particular type of encouragement that seems to be effective with my child?

Sample questions I might discuss with my child about friendship and encouragement:

- Who are your friends at school? What kinds of things do you do together? How do you get along?
- What kinds of things make you want to try harder?
- How would you explain your special learning needs to a new teacher or new friend?

Notes

Transition planning for my child

My child's strengths are:

_____

My child's skills are:

_____

My child's interests are:

_____

My goals and dreams for my child's future are:

_____

Sample questions I might discuss with my child's teachers about transition:

- What skills does my child need to develop so he or she will be successful in school next year?
- Is there a special interest or strength my child has that surprised you?
  If so, how were you able to use this in the classroom?
- Based on what you have learned about my child this year, what suggestions do you have for next year's teachers?

Sample questions I might discuss with my child:

- What kinds of things would you like to be different next school year?
- What would you like your new teachers to know about you?
- What are your goals and dreams for the future?

Notes

_____

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_____

Transition checklist

From high school to post-secondary training.

This transition checklist serves as a guide to the types of activities that a student should be engaged in during high school. Work through the checklist with your son or daughter as a starting point for assessing your transition plan and identifying items that still need to be accomplished. Encourage your son or daughter to complete as many of these items as he or she can independently.

We have:

An updated copy of the most recent educational assessment	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
A copy of the most recent Individualized Program Plan (IPP)	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Copies of transcripts	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Pertinent medical information	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Contacted the special needs offices of the schools or agencies we are considering	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
A record of the assistive technology that has been used successfully	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Checked the accommodation policies of the schools or agencies we are considering	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Prepared a list of successes and accomplishments at school and in the community	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
A summary of career searches	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Visited the campuses (electronically or in person) of the schools or agencies we are considering	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Researched funding sources and financial assistance opportunities	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Completed the goals of the transition plan	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

Resolving differences

Ways to keep informed about my child's program:

_____

Issues and concerns I have:

_____

Possible solutions:

_____

I / we:

Have met the school principal.	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet
Am / are aware of the board of education's appeal process	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

Notes

_____

_____

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_____

Keeping informed

Contact information of professionals involved in diagnosing, treating and teaching your child.

Topic	Contact name	Contact number	Date	Notes

Learning more

Questions I would like to research:

Possible sources of information:

Sample questions I might discuss with my child's teachers about researching issues:

- Can you suggest any resources and other references related to my child's special needs?
- Is there a specific area of research that might hold promise for my child, now or in the future?

Notes

My child's history

Medical and developmental history

Educational history

Symptom notes

Treatment notes

Research notes

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

Treatment plan

Crisis plan

Recovery plan

20 questions to ask during planning and IEP meetings

1. Why was my child referred for an evaluation?
2. Who made the evaluations and what methods were used?
3. How are my child's disabilities identified at this time?
4. What describes my child's strengths and learning style?
5. What describes my child's limitations and special needs?
6. What are some examples of my child's classwork?
7. What gains or setbacks have team members observed in my child's learning this past year?
8. How does my child relate to classmates?
9. What may my child reasonably accomplish this year in areas of communication, daily activities, mobility, math, etc.?
10. What independent living and pre-employment skills will my child need to work on right now?
11. Who is to provide the recommended services?
12. If placement is recommended what should that placement involve?
13. What effect will the services and setting have on meals, transportation, and contact time with students who don't have challenges of the same age?
14. Do we all agree with the recommendations for my child?
15. What methods should be used to evaluate my child's progress?
16. Who should I be in contact with, and how often should we meet to discuss my child's progress?
17. When should my child's IEP be reviewed again?
18. What learning activities for my child should I carry out at home?
19. What type of observations would be good for me to record and bring to the next planning meeting?
20. When will I receive a personal copy of my child's completed IEP form?

Meeting and phone call notes

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Agency: _____

Date: _____

Purpose / notes

_____

_____

_____

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Agency: _____

Date: _____

Purpose / notes

_____

_____

_____

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Agency: _____

Date: _____

Purpose / notes

_____

_____

_____

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Agency: _____

Date: _____

Purpose / notes

_____

_____

_____

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Children's Support Solutions

Contact us for more information on our
Children's Support Solutions services:

Call 1.866.653.2397
Email childrensupportsolutions@morneaushepell.com
Visit childrensupportsolutions.com

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