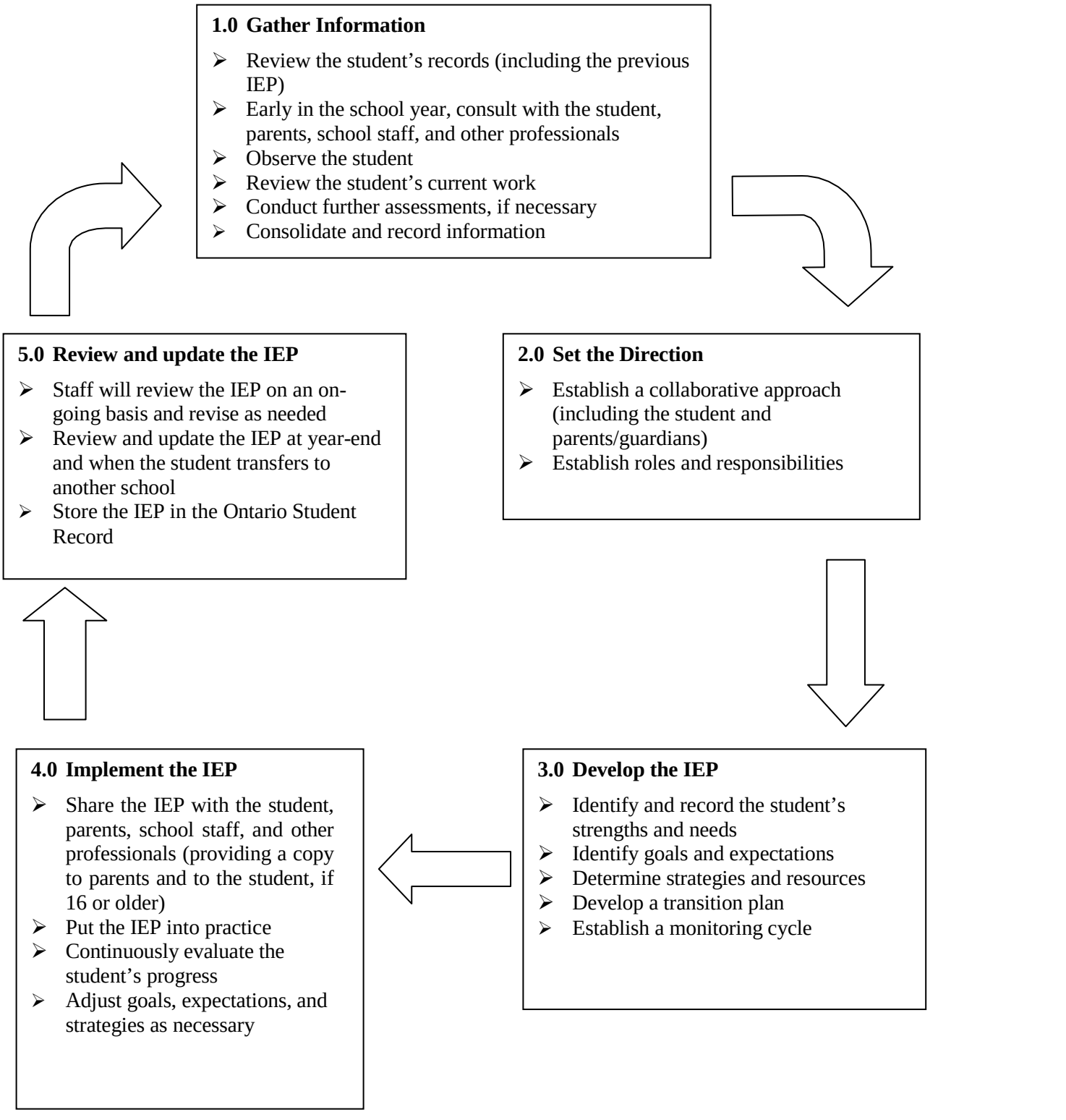
2.9: Developing an Individual Education Plan - A Collaborative Approach



Individual Education Plans

Regulation 181/98, "Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils" states that principals are required to ensure that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed for each student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee, within 30 school days of the student being placed in a special education program.

An IEP is a written plan of action prepared for a student who requires accommodations and/or modifications of the regular school program. It is a working document which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that pupil's needs, and how the program and services will be delivered. The IEP is a tool to help teachers monitor and communicate the student's growth.

An IEP will be developed and reviewed annually for all identified pupils and may be developed for non-identified pupils with special needs. In addition, a review of the IEP may occur more frequently if requested by the School-based Team, IPRC or the parent.

An IEP should be based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths, interests, and needs. It should identify specific goals and expectations for the student. The special education program and services the IEP describes should be modified as necessary by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation.

Regulation 181/98 stipulates that:

- The board shall promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an individual education plan for the pupil in consultation with the parent and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

- The individual education plan must include:
    - specific educational expectations for the pupil;
    - an outline of the special education program and services to be received by the pupil; and
    - a statement of the methods by which the pupil's progress will be reviewed.

- In developing the individual education plan, a collaborative approach is used and the principal shall ensure:
    - consultation with the parent and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil; and
    - any recommendations made by the committee (IPRC) regarding special education programs or special education services are taken into consideration.

- Within 30 school days after placement of the pupil in the program, the principal shall ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of a pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.
- The principal shall ensure that the individual education plan for a pupil is included in the pupil's Ontario Student Record (OSR), unless a parent of the pupil has objected in writing.
- The IEP will be reviewed and updated at each reporting period.

Transition Plan for Students

All exceptional students must have a transition plan as part of their Individual Education Plan in accordance with PPM 156.

Processes for Dispute Resolution Regarding the IEP

Collaboration is important to ensure that the members of the team have a common understanding of the student's strengths, interests, and needs. Each individual will bring important information to the IEP development process, lending a perspective that will add to the team's collective understanding of the student and the kind of instruction and support necessary to facilitate the student's learning. Parents are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the development of the IEP.

As outlined in "Steps to Success" (See section 2.3.2), communication with parents is important at every stage of the process. In the rare situation that the on-going collaboration does not resolve disputes, the following steps are followed:

- the classroom teacher talks with the parent;
- if no resolution, the teacher, Principal and/or resource teacher talk with the parent;
- if no resolution, the Co-ordinator of Special Education may be asked to talk with the parent
- if no resolution, the Superintendent of Special Education may be asked to talk with the parent.

Plan for Implementing the Ministry of Education Standards for IEPs

In 2000, the Ministry of Education completed "Standards for Individual Education Plans". The Lambton Kent District Board of Education developed a plan to ensure compliance with the standards by September, 2001.

Date	Objective
October, 2000	Meeting with Ministry to present standards. Presentation to SEAC re: standards.
November, 2000	Meeting with Western Region to discuss plan of action. Gap analysis between current IEP and requirements of standards.
December, 2000	Revision of current IEP to meet standards.
Mar.-April, 2001	In-service of staff on draft IEP at local level.
April, 2001	In-service of Board staff by Ministry at regional level.
April-June, 2001	Revision of IEPs for students with ISA claims. Use of new IEPs for newly identified students and during reviews. Feedback on audit from Ministry.
September, 2001	Use of new IEPs for all students.
September, 2002	Continue to evaluate and review current IEP.
January, 2003	60 IEPs were submitted to the Ministry of Education for audit.
June, 2003	Detailed feedback regarding IEP received from the Ministry of Education. IEP template updated to include information required by the Standards. In-service of staff on updated IEP.
September, 2003	Use of updated IEP for all students.
Winter, 2003	Stakeholders (Special Education Team, SEAC, staff) identify further inadequacies with current IEP. Special Education Team begins to explore new IEP templates.
Spring, 2004	Process of building new IEP template begins.
June, 2004	IEP Quality Improvement Plan submitted to Ministry of Education.
Fall, 2004	Ministry release of IEP Resource Guide. Preparation of server to handle web-based IEP.
Winter, 2004	Pilot new web-based IEP in seven schools. Establish SEAC sub-committee to provide feedback on new IEP template.
Spring, 2005	Revise new web-based IEP based on feedback from stakeholders
2005-2006	Gradual implementation of new web-based IEP
October, 2006	Five Elementary and five secondary IEPs submitted to Ministry of Education.

Date	Objective
March, 2007	Participated in IEP Collaborative Review Regional Meetings (parent input meeting as well as board team review).
June, 2007	Feedback received from the Ministry of Education resulting from the IEP Collaborative Review.
September, 2007	Revised web-based IEP template as a result of feedback received from the Ministry of Education. All exemplars were revised.
November, 2007	All schools received in-service re: Collaborative IEP Review.
Fall, 2008	Area Resource Mentors work collaboratively with Resource Teachers.
Fall, 2008	Resource Teacher and Special Class Teacher in-service re: writing observable and measurable goals and expectations.
Fall, 2008	IEP exemplars for Principals created and in-service provided for Principals, complete with a checklist to review before signing IEPs.
February, 2009	Area Resource Team groups complete exercises of writing observable and measurable goals and expectations.
Winter, 2009	Internal audit conducted examining 10% of IEPs. Specific feedback was provided to each school.
Spring, 2009	More exemplars created. Area Resource Team groups practiced writing observable and measurable goals for a second time.
May, 2009	All staffs participated in PD Day IEP activities provided by the Special Education Department. District Resource Teacher meeting re: further development of the IEP.
2009-2010	Area Resource Mentors continue to provide individual support in the schools. Internal audit conducted. Specific feedback was provided to each school.
2010-2011	Area Resource Mentors continue to provide individual support in the schools. Internal audit conducted. Specific feedback was provided to each school.
2011-2012	Area Resource Mentors continue to provide individual support in the schools. Internal audit conducted. Specific feedback was provided to each school.
May, 2012	Ministry of Education conducts an IEP Audit. Feedback received.
May, 2012	Special Class Teacher in-service re: IEP Development.
2014 - 2015	Implementation of PPM 156. Transition planning incorporated into eLite I.E.P. System. In-service of Resource Teachers and Alternative Learning and Life Skills Teachers.