Program Planning
A Team Approach

What is the program planning process?

The program planning process is a team approach to plan an appropriate education for students with special needs, and to ensure effective transitions from the early years to adult life.

Why is the program planning process important?

Through the program planning process, students with special needs are supported to meet their learning outcomes. Students are more likely to succeed if members of the program planning team work together.

How does the program planning process assist students to achieve learning outcomes?

Any, or all, of the following can happen:

- Strategies and resources specific to the strengths and needs of the student are identified to help students meet the learning outcomes. These strategies and/or resources are called adaptations (see the *Adaptations: Strategies and Resources* fact sheet).

- The program planning team may decide to seek additional information or refer the student for further assessment.

- The program planning team may decide to develop an individual program plan (IPP).

  An IPP is a statement of Annual Individualized Outcomes and Specific Individualized Outcomes based on the student's strengths and needs, developed for students for whom Nova Scotia's public school program learning outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable. Recommended services and supports, roles and responsibilities, and review dates are also outlined in the IPP. Transition outcomes are considered and developed as part of an IPP.

Who can make a referral for a program planning team meeting?

A referral to a program planning team can be initiated by the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's teacher(s), or guidance counsellor.

To whom is the referral made?

The first point of contact when requesting a program planning team meeting is the student's teacher. If either the teacher or parent disagrees on the need for a referral, the matter should be referred to the principal who will attempt to resolve the issue. If this does not bring resolution, student services personnel at the school board should be contacted.

> Learning outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do at various points in their school career. These can be public school program learning outcomes, or they can be "individualized," developed specifically for an individual student.

> Members of the program planning team are those who have responsibility for the student's learning. These include
> - parent(s) or guardian(s)
> - principal/vice principal
> - teachers, including resource teachers
> - other professional staff involved
> - the student, if appropriate
> - additional members, depending on the learning needs of the student and personnel resources of the school board and the community

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Supporting
Student
Success

What are team member responsibilities?

Parents and guardians

- are actively involved in the program planning process
- share information about their child's strengths, needs, and aspirations
- ensure that information to support the most effective transition is shared (e.g., home to school, grade to grade, school to school, school to community)
- share information about events, family circumstances, and educational history that could have an impact (good or bad) on programming and services
- share information about other professionals or agencies with which they are working and have worked
- carry out the specific parts of the program plan that are their responsibility as agreed within the team

Administrators

- assume a leadership role in the program planning process
- support the right of parents/guardians to be involved
- ensure that members, including parents/guardians, are notified of the date, time, and location of program planning meetings
- chair, or designate a person to chair, the program planning team meeting
- ensure that a written record of proceedings is kept
- are aware of communication regarding programming and services for students
- ensure that the program plan developed through the program planning process is implemented, tracked, and monitored.

Teachers and other professional school-based staff

- participate in the program planning process for students for whom they have responsibility
- implement program plans, as required
- track, monitor, and report on student progress
- review student records to support transitioning and programming

Students (when appropriate)

- speak up for themselves by sharing their strengths, needs, and aspirations
- share information about personal/academic circumstances that could have an impact (good or bad) on their programming
- are involved in the development of appropriate programming and services
- carry out those specific parts of the program plan that are their responsibility as agreed upon by the program planning team

Board-based support staff (when appropriate)

- participate in the program planning process
- support teams to work effectively
- ensure that teams have access to information and knowledge of resources/services available within the board or community