

## INTEGRATION IN EDUCATION

Integration in education means placing students who are deemed to be "exceptional" ( a Ministry term which includes mentally retarded, gifted, learning disabled, etc. ) into regular classes in their local neighbourhood schools with their age-appropriate peers and providing the students and teachers with whatever supports are necessary to promote a good education. In other words, it means allowing the student to attend the school and class she/he would attend if she/he were not labelled "exceptional".

As well as being a basic human right, integration has many advantages:

- 1) It encourages the development of positive attitudes on the part of the non-exceptional students and staff and community
- 2) It provides exceptional students with appropriate models for learning social and academic skills
- 3) It encourages friendships between exceptional and non-exceptional people
- 4) It provides a good basis from which an exceptional student will grow to live as independently as possible, as a contributing, active, responsible member of a community in adulthood: participating in social, religious, political and recreational activities and and contributing to the workforce.

SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION IS HAPPENING IN SEVERAL ONTARIO SCHOOL-BOARDS. INTEGRATED EDUCATION IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS ENSURING THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE LABELLED "EXCEPTIONAL" WILL BE ABLE TO LEAD "NORMAL" LIVES.