



Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

**RESPONSE
OF THE
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOC.
OF ONTARIO
TO THE
CONSULTATION PAPER
ON THE
INTEGRATION OF
EXCEPTIONAL PUPILS**

JUNE 1992

Respondent Information

Consultation Paper on the Integration of Exceptional Pupils

Respondent's Name: DOWN SYNDROME ASSOC. OF ONTARIO

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| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents' association | 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers' federation |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Individual parent | 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Educators' association |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal people's association | 12. <input type="checkbox"/> School staff |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Racial/cultural association | 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Individual teacher |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone association | 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff or student of Faculty of Education or OISE |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Students' association | 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Labour |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Individual student | 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Business/industry |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> School board | 17. <input type="checkbox"/> Other ministries |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Trustees' association | 18. <input type="checkbox"/> Other organization |

Where, applicable, please in appropriate space:

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| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> JK/SK | 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Primary | 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Junior |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR RESPONSE WAS DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH OUR 19 LOCAL AFFILIATES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE AND WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT OUR MAY 9, 1992 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING.



Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

The Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario uses the terms "integration", "mainstreaming" and "inclusion" interchangeably. A copy of our policy statement on integration is attached. (Appendix A)

In March 1991, the Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario agreed to be involved in a consultation process on "how to" best implement quality integration, not a "whether to" consultation process which is the underlying message of this document.

This document:

1. proposes a definition of integration which is in no way related to any acceptable definition nor related to integration as it is successfully practised by Boards of Education committed to integration.
2. enlarges the scope of this document to include all students labelled "exceptional". This paper has tried to obscure the fact that there are over 10,000 children in this Province completely segregated from their peers. Many of these children have Down syndrome. It is this group of children, with developmental disabilities, who is the true focus of the drive for equity.
3. proposes a "Range of Placements" which adheres to the Cascade Model, implying that children have to earn the right or somehow qualify for integration. "Range of Placements" cannot be discussed until legislation is in place guaranteeing children the right to integration. (see Appendix B)
4. still refuses to grant parents the right to challenge their child's program. Once integration is in place, the focus of the IPRC should be on programming. The Consultation Paper does not take a strong proactive stand on the right of children to integration. "Parental Choice" has no meaning unless children have the right to integration.
5. uses the phrase, "meets the needs of the child." This continues to leave the power in the hands of the school boards who have always used this slight of hand argument to keep our children out of regular classes. Integration - Equality, by its very definition, meets the needs of all children. The task is how to develop and deliver a program which meets the educational needs of the child, not where to deliver it. In the light of the OTAB Legislation, this task becomes even more critical.

6. pushes back, yet again, the implementation date to September 1993. Our children have waited long enough and have no more time to lose. Our implementation date remains September 1992 and we will be demanding that school boards behave accordingly.
7. is being presented as a recessionary document, whereas it should be for all times. The basic right of a child to be included with his/her peers is the issue, not the cost. Furthermore, several studies have shown that mainstreaming is a more cost effective method of service delivery than segregation.

This Consultation Paper has weakened the momentum of Integration. Integration as the norm is not the issue: the right to equality is the issue.

This government has committed itself to Integration. This document is "for all times" not only for recessionary times. In trying to placate everyone, this document has victimized our children again. It is perpetuating the myth that a different set of rules applies to our children. Get beyond the stigma and see the child!

Integration is mainstreaming. It calls for equal distribution of resources in special education, equal access to educational opportunities, and equality of outcome for all students.

The time for talking is over - it is time for implementation.

Our children don't need more words. They need the legislated right to Integration NOW!



Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

SCHOOL INTEGRATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DOWN SYNDROME (D.S.)

The terms "integration", "mainstreaming" and "inclusion" are currently used by different people and groups to mean different things. The Down's Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario tends to favour the word "integration", however, we consider the terms "mainstreaming" and "inclusion" to be synonymous.

SCHOOL INTEGRATION IS DEFINED AS:

- full-time placement in a regular, chronologically age appropriate class, in the neighbourhood school (the school the student would be attending if s/he were not labelled "exceptional") with whatever programme modifications and support services are required to meet the student's needs. (Programme modification may include short periods of withdrawal from the classroom to meet individual needs, but it most emphatically does not include placement in a special education class for students currently labelled Educable Mentally Retarded (Slow Learner), Trainable Mentally Retarded, or Multi-handicapped.)

THE GOALS OF SCHOOL INTEGRATION ARE:

- to ensure that students with D.S. receive a quality education to help them develop to their fullest potential academically, socially, spiritually, physically and emotionally.
- to ensure that students with D.S. are part of a community in which each student is valued as an integral member, and experiences a sense of belonging.
- to provide the foundation for equality of opportunity for people with D.S. as they enter adulthood.

SCHOOL INTEGRATION WORKS WHEN IT INCORPORATES THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS AND ACTIONS:

- the belief, set in law, enforced in attitude and action, that students with D.S. are entitled to integrated education, ensured by due-process protections, as an equal benefit under the law.
- Boards of Education actively support integration by consulting meaningfully with the Special Education Advisory Committees and provide training in integration for school personnel and monitor the process.
- the school staff, from the principal to the caretaker, work to support the integration of the student into the social fabric of the school.

- the teacher takes responsibility for all of the students in his/her classroom, modelling respect for diversity and the principle that all students are equally valuable to the group.
- the programming for students with D.S. is based on a strengths and needs assessment rather than on traditional testing and labelling.
- teachers receive appropriate training, support and help to meet their students' needs.
- parents collaborate as respected members of a team working for the best interests of their child.

In the words of George Flynn, Director of Education for the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board, "Integration then means the process of making whole - of uniting different parts in a new totality - in this case a new community".

Down's Syndrome Assoc. Of Ontario
January 04, 1991



Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

With the assistance of the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped (ARCH), the Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario has had an amendment to the Education Act drafted, which would allow:

1. for students with developmental disabilities to be integrated,
2. a route for students with other exceptionalities to retain their segregated classes, and
3. the Minister to determine when an exemption shall be granted.

The Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario has also confirmed that ARCH will be available to the Legislative Branch of the Ministry of Education to write the amendment to the Act that flows from the Consultation Paper.

Proposed Amendment

Add 2 new subsections to section 31 of the Act:

- (3) An exceptional person has the right to attend any school which he or she would have the right to attend, but for the child's exceptionality, to a classroom appropriate to the child's chronological age, with appropriate program modifications and appropriate special education programs and services.
- (4) A board may apply to the Minister and be granted a temporary exemption from the obligation contained in subsection (3).